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ANNEX
II

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Mary Birdwell

Mary Birdwell

Mary Birdwell

A MEMOIR
OF THE
LIFE OF EDWARD STABLER,

Late of Alexandria in the District of Columbia;

WITH A COLLECTION OF HIS LETTERS.

BY HIS SON, WILLIAM STABLER.

~~~~~  
Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end  
of that man is peace.—Psalm xxxvii. v. 37.  
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PREFACE.

11-27-53 Cf. 67 '87

THE writer of the following narrative having been favoured to receive instruction, both by precept and example, from the subject of it, during many years, had contemplated a work in some respects like the present, for the benefit of those of his brothers and sisters who were too young at the time of their father's death to appreciate his character, or understand his counsels. The prospect was entertained without a view to publication; but some of his friends desiring to possess such a memoir, and believing that it would be useful in a larger circle than the one at first proposed, suggested the propriety of suiting it to that end. Under this encouragement (which was often repeated) and the influence of strong attachment to the memory of a beloved parent, the following essay has been produced.

The materials for the account of the early part of his father's life, are chiefly drawn from the memory of his aunt, Deborah Stabler, who is now in her eighty-first year, and still retains a lively recollection of that period. The time spent by the writer in her company, reviewing the subject and selecting, by her aid, those particulars which were thought best calculated to form

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873 (Stabler)
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an interesting and instructing narrative, will long be affectionately remembered.*

The object in preparing this work has been to do good:—and a hope has been entertained, that many reflecting minds will be able to receive the truth for its own beauty, and draw consolation from the experience of a fellow-traveller. Some of the views, however, may be different from those held by others; but if they correspond with experience, and produce conviction of the truth, let them not be rejected; for truth is of greater importance than the opinions of men, or any systems of human invention, how much soever they may be venerated for their antiquity, and their acceptance with mankind.

W. S.

Alexandria, D. C., 12th mo. 1844

* Deborah Stabler, above named, departed this life on the 27th of 6th month, 1845, in the eighty-second year of her age, retaining her understanding and peaceful tranquillity to the last moment. She had been a member of Sandy Spring meeting of Friends, for about fifty-two years, and a minister of the gospel more than forty years. For several months previous to her decease, her bodily powers gradually declined; during which time, she often said she believed the period of her departure was near at hand: and in view of the solemn change, she always spoke in a manner affording the clearest evidence and full assurance, that, although during a long life she had been subjected to many close trials, and deeply proving baptisms, she was now prepared, with joy unspeakable, "to join the assembly of the just made perfect."

T. P. S.

The following Memorial concerning EDWARD STABLER, was read in, and approved by Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in the 10th month, 1831.

EDWARD STABLER was born at Petersburg, in Virginia, on the 28th day of the 9th month, 1769. Having early in life yielded to the refining and regulating influences of Divine love, by its operation his spiritual vision became purged from those mists which constitute that delusive medium, through which things of an evanescent and unsubstantial nature, are, in our view, vested with the attributes of permanency and solid value,—and was directed singly to that light which makes manifest; and which, by detecting the fallacy, enables us to distinguish between what is essentially good, and that which is evil. Having reduced the principles which he adopted, to the test of experience, and finding that they were of efficacy sufficient to sustain him, and of power enough to maintain their integrity and authority over the soul, “he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God.” He ventured his all upon them; and by a steadfast adherence to the eternal and immutable principles of Truth, he witnessed a solid establishment on that which stands independent of the wisdom and contrivances of men.

In the gradual progress of discovery, he became sensible of the absolute necessity of investigating things for himself, and of knowing their certainty from the evidence of those internal senses, by which Divine and spiritual objects are apprehended, weighed, and appreciated. His acquaintance with the scriptures was extensive; for he had studied them diligently, and was mainly concerned to bring to this study the requisite qualification for prosecuting it successfully,—an honest desire to read them in that light which alone is able to give a right understanding of them. Having thus early entered into the school of Christ, and having been a diligent scholar in the course of instruction, he became obedient to his teacher; and in due time he so unreservedly yielded obedience to the great primary law of the institution, viz. the law of love,—that the exercise of that principle appeared ever after to constitute the leading feature in his character.

Endowed by nature with a clear, comprehensive, and discriminating mind, capable of weighing evidence,—when objects were presented to his view accompanied by testimony sufficient to establish their nature, the first step, in the conclusions of such a mind, was to embrace the Truth in the love of it; the next, to do what was required. Having ascertained for himself, that the path of safety was the way of the cross, he turned a deaf ear to the alluring calls and solicitations of the honours, the pleasures and amusements, which the world presents. He shunned not the burden of that restraining Power, which, when faithfully borne, operates as a salutary check upon that indulgence of the

affections and lusts, which is inconsistent with the even tenor of the life of a follower of Christ—a relation to the holy Head of the church, in which it was the chief labour of his life to stand,—not by the exercise of a heated zeal for dogmas and opinions, but by a faithful submission to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus our Lord, which Paul said had set *him* “free from the law of sin and death,” and which will emancipate every soul that yields to its dominion, from the degrading servitude of sin and corruption.

Having, in this manner, submitted to the baptizing power of Truth, and suffered his mind to be gradually trained to obedience under the discipline of the cross, he became prepared for the Master’s use; and feeling a necessity laid upon him, to declare to others “what the Lord had done for his soul;” he made his first appearance in the ministry, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. His communications and testimonies were clear and perspicuous, and well calculated to fix the attention of those to whom they were addressed. He possessed a rare felicity in elucidating and enforcing those deeply interesting views of Divine and spiritual truths, which were opened in his own mind. He was no less happy in his illustrations of scripture. These were always rational and instructive, and, not seldom, luminous and attractive. Nor was his usefulness as a testimony-bearer to the Truth, confined to public occasions. His colloquial powers, in the private circle, were of the first order; and his amiable disposition, his bland and gentle manners, opened for him a wide avenue to the hearts and affections of the

young. To these, his conversation, which generally turned upon subjects of a deeply interesting character, proposed in a manner suitable to their age and understanding,—was peculiarly attractive; and which, being accompanied by an evidence of affectionate love and regard for the tender lambs of the flock, rendered the impression irresistible.

There is a cloud of living witnesses who can testify to the pure and evangelical nature of his ministry; calling the people from *names* to *things*,—from the empty *shadow* to the living *substance*. Actuated by the spirit and love of the gospel,—the distinguishing mark of true discipleship, which knows no distinction of sects or parties,—he was induced frequently to leave his temporal concerns, and travel extensively in the ministry; in which service, his labours were very acceptable to those for whose sake they were undertaken. In the exercise of his gift in the ministry, one great object was, to impress the minds of his hearers with the importance of examining things for themselves,—of attending to their own experience,—of reading over and over the leaves of their own lives, which were always open before them; that this examination, honestly undertaken and faithfully prosecuted in that “light which makes manifest,” would result in a clear view of the distinction between good and evil, accompanied by a full conviction, that the one always *blesses*, and the other as uniformly *torments*. There being but one Source of good, every thing that blesses, or produces good, must proceed from it. In all his communications, he quoted largely

from the scriptures, which he fully believed to have been written by holy men, as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

His belief in the Divinity of Christ, the Son of God and sent of the Father, and his indispensable agency in the redemption of man, was unqualified. That "Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God,"—that the operation of this power is unlimited, either by time or space.—"Before Abraham was, I am."—"It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing:" and that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,"—are scripture testimonies, to which he not only yielded a full assent, but could set his seal, from the evidence within himself, that *these testimonies were true*. He was very fully impressed with the scripture declaration, that "God is love;" and that all the dealings of God to man, are in love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." True Gospel love extends to enemies;—"to love our neighbours as ourselves;"—and to "do unto others as we would that they should do unto us." In a word, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

We who have been witnesses of his labours,—of his valuable services, and of his blameless life,—have thought it right to put upon record a short memorial of this our beloved friend, now removed from amongst us, that the younger portion of the present generation, and those who may succeed them, may be encouraged to emulate his example, and come forth as standard-

bearers in the cause of Truth and righteousness, in their day, as he did in his. To whomsoever he was known, (and he was very generally known to the body of Friends in this country,) to many of us, particularly, who have for a long series of years been his cotemporaries and intimately acquainted with him,—his memorial is already written, engraved on the living tablets of our hearts and affections, in characters deeper and more indelible than the pen of mortal can trace.

He was diligent in the attendance of meetings established in the order of Society, and concerned to encourage others to increased faithfulness in the discharge of this important duty. The last communication which he delivered, was a very impressive one, on the *importance of silence*; enforcing the doctrine by appropriate scripture authorities.

Within the circle of his own family, his deportment was marked by obedience to the same blessed principle, that actuated him when more immediately before the eyes of the world. The emotions of a temper naturally ardent, often occasioned him close trials and conflicts of feeling; but which he was enabled to restrain by the controlling influences of Divine grace. His carriage towards every member of his family, both as a husband and a parent,—was exceedingly affectionate and exemplary; and showed that his aim was to promote their happiness, as far as it was in his power. He secured the affections of his children while their minds were yet tender, by the principle of Love; and when their understandings became suf-

ficiently matured, he endeavoured to urge upon them every motive which could influence a rational mind, to pursue that course of conduct and faithfulness of which he was himself so bright an example.

The last meeting he attended was very small, and silent. At the close of it, he remarked to a friend, that he would be willing to go and sit there, as long as any one should be left to sit with him; the openings of Divine Truth upon his mind, that day, had been so precious:

In his last sickness, his mind was in a sweet and resigned state; and at one time he was observed to close his supplication to the Throne of grace, with these words: "Thy will be done."

His useful and exemplary life was terminated at Alexandria, D. C. on the 18th of the 1st month, 1831, in the sixty-second year of his age.

M E M O I R .

EDWARD STABLER, the father of the subject of this memoir, was born near York in England of worthy parents who belonged to the Society of Friends, and from whom he received a guarded and virtuous education. When he came to the age of twenty-one years, he resolved (for the benefit of a delicate constitution) to remove to America; which object he accomplished in the year 1753. At first he resided in Philadelphia, but afterwards on a visit to the town of Petersburg in Virginia, he was so well pleased with the advantages afforded by the latter place, as to make it his permanent home. No Friends then resided in Petersburg; but he diligently attended the nearest meeting of the Society, which was held at the distance of twelve miles.

In the course of a short time after his settlement, he connected himself in marriage with Mary Robinson, of Chester near Philadelphia. They had six children; Edward, Ann, Ann, Mary, William, and Edward. The first two died when young. The second Ann was married to Samuel Hough; and Mary, to Mahlon Hough;—both of Loudoun county, in Virginia. William married Deborah; and Ed-

ward, Mary; both daughters of Thomas Pleasants, of Beaverdam, Goochland county, in the same State.

From letters still preserved in the family, and the recollections of those who knew him, we learn that our worthy ancestor sustained with zeal and affection through life, the relations of son, husband, parent and friend. The following dutiful expressions are found in a letter addressed to his father, upon his arrival in this country: "Dear Father, though we are far separated in body, yet thou art present with me in mind, and I hope distance will not abate my affection for thee. I am so far very well satisfied with my change, and desire I may always have my dependance upon that Arm that has hitherto helped and preserved me, and is still able to support me through the future scenes of this life. I am not able to say a great deal at this time, but my love is as great as if I had expressed it in more words. I hope I shall always retain a sense of thy great care and affection towards me from a child; and I am affected in the remembrance thereof with a sense of the many evils I should have run into, if I had not been prevented by thy kind oversight: for though thy counsels and good advice seemed at times to have little place with me, yet afterwards I found them like bread cast upon the waters that returned after many days."

In 1759, when addressing three relatives whom he empowered to act in his place as Executor of his father's Will, he writes thus: "Being very sensible that the death of my dear father will be a great loss to the poor of Gate Fulford, I would have forty

pounds more given to them, to be distributed by the same persons mentioned in the Will; also forty pounds to poor Friends within the verge of York monthly meeting."

The cares of extensive mercantile business, in which he was many years engaged, did not hinder him from being an active and useful member of the Society of Friends, among whom he became an approved minister.

EDWARD, the youngest child of Edward and Mary Stabler, was born in Petersburg on the 28th day of the 9th month, 1769. Until the time of his mother's death in the 12th month, 1780, when he was eleven years old, little is known of his life; but, through the careful attentions of his parents, he was preserved in comparative innocence. About this early period of his age, he was occupied at times with the consideration of his state of being in this world, and his position in relation to his fellow-beings. He has often recounted for the instruction of his children, a circumstance which called forth the painful exercise of his judgment when he was about eight years old. Among his associates at school, was a boy of extraordinary powers in the art of pleasing his companions. His company was sought by all. He entertained them with diverting stories and remarks, and led them on from one amusement to another, encouraging their progress by the high zest with which he enjoyed the recreation himself. Feeling a strong desire to be thus admired, the subject of this memoir asked his

mother why "*the good man*" had not made him like this little boy? His parent endeavoured to represent the case so as to satisfy his mind; but the disparity of which he complained, was too painfully evident to admit of explanation by any means less impressive than the circumstances which had called it into notice. This means was afforded by a dream. In the course of a train of visionary events natural to the mind of a child, he saw this boy amusing a company of evil spirits who had made him prisoner. Being himself within the grasp of one of these horrid creatures, he lamented bitterly the want of faculties like those possessed by his little friend, which he now thought might save him from destruction: but he soon found them of no avail to his companion—for when the evil spirits ceased to be amused with his stories, they consigned him to the flames. In the dreadful expectation of a similar calamity, the young dreamer started from the arms of his enemy and effected his escape.

On the morning after this dream, his mind was so deeply impressed with its awful circumstances, that on taking his usual seat at the feet of his mother, he remained silent for some time. He was roused at length by the query of his affectionate parent, whether he had heard of the death of little Jack Dennison? "No!" was the prompt and agitated reply—"when did he die?" Last night. An eventful stillness followed this conversation, in which the little dreamer formed the noble resolution to cultivate his own powers, without coveting the qualifications of others.

After the death of his mother, he and his brother were placed at the school of a Friend by the name of Benjamin Russell; at that time the most approved Friends' school in Virginia. Here they remained but a short period; for their father, on a journey to Philadelphia, was so much pleased with a school at Pipe Creek, in the State of Maryland, kept by Joel Wright, that he removed his sons to that institution. At Pipe Creek they remained a year or more; after which William was apprenticed to doctor John Thompson of Petersburg, Virginia, to learn the business of druggist and apothecary; and Edward was placed with his brother-in-law Mahlon Hough, at Hillsborough in Loudoun county. Here he remained awhile, and afterwards resided with Samuel Hough, near Leesburg, who had married his sister Ann. During Edward's residence at Hillsborough, his father died; of whom he often spoke with much affection.

The cause of his removal from the residence of his brother-in-law Mahlon Hough, is worthy of note, as it exhibits his desire to pursue a virtuous life, and manifests the care of his brother William for his welfare. There was at Hillsborough a company of dissolute men with whom he was in some measure obliged to associate, or avoid the society of young people. His brother trembled for him, and wrote a letter of salutary counsel, from the influence of which, in part, but mainly from his own convictions of propriety, he resolved to change his home.

Having acquired some knowledge of the tanning business at Hillsborough, and now looking to the

means of a future livelihood, it was judged expedient by his friends that he should perfect himself in that trade; for which purpose he entered into the employment of John Love, a Friend of York in Pennsylvania. He was now between the sixteenth and eighteenth years of his age; and he spent a considerable portion of the time until his twentieth year, in the service of this Friend. By diligent attention to his duties, he acquired a competent knowledge of the business, and was generously permitted by his employer to leave him a year or more before he was of age. The sacrifice of interest on the part of John Love, is worthy of remembrance; and the motives of his pupil in desiring the favour, like those which had actuated him at Hillsborough, may be recorded for the imitation of other young persons. He was associated in his labours with hired hands and apprentices, some of whom had been taken from the lower orders of society, where they had run into excesses, and become regardless of the obligations of morality and religion. From the company of such minds he desired to be released, and to breathe a moral atmosphere of greater purity. So important did he consider the influence of this step upon his after life, that he has been heard to commemorate it as a "signal blessing."

During a year after his departure from York, he resided at Leesburg, in Virginia; and at the close of this period he made a visit to Beaverdam, to attend the marriage of his brother William with Deborah, the daughter of Thomas Pleasants. Being now in

the buoyancy of youth, he enjoyed with more than common interest the congenial society he met with there; among whom was Mary, a younger daughter, who became the object of his warmest affection. It is worthy of remark, that the gentlest admonition was at any time sufficient to bring his mind to a proper balance, and save him from the unpleasant consequences which are often the result of an undue indulgence of strong feelings and an ardent imagination.

On the return of his brother William, after his marriage, to the town of Leesburg, where he had been (for some time before) engaged in the drug business, Edward Stabler became a member of his family; by which means he enjoyed the society he loved, and found a business which he could pursue without the contaminating influence of low company. From the latter part of 1789 to the close of 1791, he spent his time in rendering assistance to his brother William. His leisure hours were now mostly employed in the acquisition of knowledge of various kinds. He read all that he could meet with, which he thought likely to be improving, whether literary, scientific, historical, or religious. To the chasteness of his selections in reading and conversation, may be ascribed the excellence of those colloquial powers, which, united with an amiable disposition, rendered him through life a profitable and interesting associate.

By the exercise of religious thoughtfulness and care, he had been preserved from the evils attendant on vulgarity and profaneness; but now, a new

and more alluring danger presented itself in the attractions and dissipation of fashionable society. His sprightliness, eloquence, and knowledge, occasioned his company to be sought by many of this class; but the prudent advice of his sister, who had become acquainted with the delusive character of worldly greatness and human applause, was the means, through Divine aid, of preserving him from making a wreck of his happiness. From the time of her marriage with his brother William, she had exercised over him the care of an elder sister; and as the counsels of a pious woman seldom fail deeply to impress a sensitive mind, this care was often of great value and importance to him.

At the close of the period which we have been contemplating, he had acquired all the knowledge which could be obtained from the business of his brother; and as he had stored his mind with further information on the subjects it embraced, it was thought best by his friends and himself that he should look for a situation where he might commence business on his own account. Among the many inducements to this step, the strongest was the desire to accomplish his marriage with Mary Pleasants. The intended connexion met with her father's approval; and although he was able to establish them comfortably, he preferred that they should depend on their own exertions in procuring a livelihood, and therefore withheld his consent until his expected son-in-law had provided a home, together with a fair prospect of the means to support a family. This reserve, which delayed their

marriage for some time, was the cause of unaffected sorrow to the two young people; but we may a little anticipate the course of events by observing, that when Edward Stabler had placed himself in a situation to obtain his consent, Thomas Pleasants not only sanctioned the accomplishment of their wishes, but extended to them pecuniary assistance, and the counsels (which he could well do) of experience and wisdom.

Having no capital with which to commence business, Edward Stabler now determined to make a journey into the lower part of Virginia, and through the State of North Carolina, to collect the fragments of an ample patrimonial estate which had been scattered by the disasters of the revolutionary war. In this search, he spent six months unavailingly; but hard as his lot appeared, he has often since spoken of the disappointment as a blessing, because it occasioned him to depend chiefly upon his own exertions; and we may add, that it furnished employment for talents which, under other circumstances, instead of proving a benefit to himself and others, might have hurried him after the allurements of the world, and eventually plunged him into dissipation and crime.

During this "exile," as he termed it, from the society of beloved relations, he thus gave utterance to the overflowings of his heart, in a letter to his brother and his sister-in-law, dated the 19th of the 12th month, 1791: "Since I left you, I have been very anxious for some information concerning your health and welfare, both of which I sincerely hope you may

experience in fruition. The melancholy views which attended my sympathy for your distress, during my sister's illness, have been my constant companions since I left you, and will continue with me until I receive assurances of her recovery. What grim physicians, and yet what salutary ones, are afflictions! Were nothing but mirth, festivity and joy to present themselves to our senses, how soon would they grow insipid, and lose that exhilarating power which is so refreshing to our nature! The wisest of men has well said, that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. This doubtless he meant in a spiritual sense; and I think that to admit a moiety of the position, it will be a good recipe for temporal happiness. Retiring from the house of jollity into the mansions of sorrow, what an excellent lesson is taught us! I have at times wondered at the dissoluteness of men's morals and principles, when the great book of universal nature lies open before them, in which they might (if they would) read the infallible consequences of those actions which spring from depraved principles. But, alas! I am guilty as well as they; and am also continually transgressing that law of Truth which would guide me into the paths of virtue, and consequently of bliss. Whence does it come, or how is it that we thus daily run counter to every thing which is right? If a conviction of reason were sufficient to render us more circumspect, I should have been so long ere this; but *reason* is too weak a principle, too easily warped by the perverse affections of our imperfect nature, and ever too liable

to a bias in favour of what appears to us delightful. *I have been told that the "internal principle of Divine information will guide me in all that is right."*—*I believe it; but this belief is nothing more than a conviction of reason, and I am convinced there must be more. I can justly say with the patriarch Job, "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." Where then shall I look for him whom my soul would love, if he does not of himself become manifest? I would willingly, were it in my power, act consistently with the principles which I profess to be guided by, but which I am very ignorant of except in theory, and that, as I said before, will not do. I believe I am indebted for the revival of these feelings (which are not new to me) to the affectionate advice of my sister, at the time I parted with her. It was not without its effect, though I am apprehensive that for want of a heart properly prepared for the reception and improvement of the truly pathetic and interesting advice which she then gave me, I have not profited by it so much as I might have done.*

Adieu! that peace and happiness may attend you, is the wish of your affectionate brother,

EDWARD STABLER."

The views on the subject of religion, expressed in the foregoing letter, with others of a like cast that will be found in the present narrative, may be interestingly compared with that enlightened and extended prospect which was afterwards opened to his mind.

Upon his return to Leesburg, it was decided that he should open a drug store in Alexandria; and as he felt a delicacy in asking aid from his intended father-in-law, he applied to his maternal uncle, William Robinson of Philadelphia, to obtain a credit for him to the amount of a hundred pounds. This request was promptly granted; and the relative who thus befriended him, had afterwards the satisfaction to find that his confidence had not been misplaced. Although Edward Stabler began his commercial life in a small and humble way, yet his situation for business was a good one; and he has since said, that in the first year he paid for his goods, and doubled his stock. On removing to his new home in the latter part of 1792, he boarded with John Butcher and his wife, two valuable Friends, with whom he found himself shielded from the dangers attendant on living in a public house. In after time he recurred to the comfort and instruction which he had received in this family, as among the favors that had been dispensed to him. These Friends were richly entitled not only to his gratitude, but that of nearly all the young men of the Society of Friends who settled about that time in Alexandria; for, without reference to pecuniary emolument, these good people took them into their family as a means of protection from the dangers and snares which beset the paths of youth.

A circumstance in the life of John Butcher, which he related for the instruction of the subject of this memoir, will furnish evidence of his fatherly care.

The impression which it produced upon the mind of the latter, was powerful and lasting. This Friend was among the first of the Society who settled at Alexandria, where he commenced his career in business with industry and honesty, as his principal capital. He soon obtained a standing which attracted the notice of some persons of the highest rank in the community, by one of whom he was invited to attend a meeting of a Literary Club. The subject of discussion on this evening was, "The Christian Religion; and against it were arrayed several persons of the first order for talents and acquirements. Hostile arguments, insinuations, and other weapons of skilful debate, were used with so much earnestness and force against the truth of this Divine gift to man, that the judgment of the visiter was, for the time, thrown from its balance. Captivated by specious eloquence, he imagined that he had hitherto lived under a delusion, and he now wondered that neither himself nor his friends had detected the imposture. Whilst reasoning thus, a secret voice, as distinctly uttered to his understanding as if his ears had heard the sound, warned him to beware. "Reflect maturely before deciding on this subject," it appeared to say. "Thou art acquainted with the good fruits of the christian religion in the lives of many of thy friends; if the products of scepticism, and obedience to the dictates of unenlightened reason, be better than these, then give them the preference, but not before." The authority with which this caution impressed itself upon his mind—which was doubtless a Divine intimation—dispelled all thought of

opposition, and determined him to subject the matter to this rigid scrutiny. As he moved along afterwards in the quiet observance of his duties, he watched the conduct of those men whose intellectual power had nearly warped him from the right way; and he saw them, in continuation of their course, descend step by step in the downward path, until each one came to a wretched end.

Between the settlement of Edward Stabler in Alexandria and the time of his marriage, no other event worthy of particular notice, has come to our knowledge. He spent this period in diligent application to his business, which from its fluctuations was the cause by turns of hope and discouragement,—and he was also diligent in adding to his stores of useful knowledge. His company was sought by many of the intelligent and respectable inhabitants of the town, and enticements were often thrown in his way to depart from the narrow path of self-denial, which in his mind was the path of duty.

Believing that the right time for the accomplishment of his marriage was now drawing near, he thus sought the advice of his brother and sister in a letter dated the 5th of the 9th month, 1793: “To you whose advices have ever appeared to be the genuine dictates of affection, I apply for instruction in an emergency which, as it is to me most momentous because the welfare of my greatest earthly treasure depends upon it,—requires that I act from wise counsel, for fear that I may be led by distrust on the one side, or a sanguine disposition on the other, to act incon-

sistently with what may be productive of advantage to her and myself. The greatest impediment to our union which has hitherto appeared, seems now in part to be done away. I am flattered with the hope that my business will produce sufficient for a comfortable maintenance; and, though the time has been when I thought I should not sit down satisfied with less than the elegancies of life, I am now so far humbled as to feel thankful for those things which are necessary, and to wait until industry, co-operating with the good pleasure of my Creator, shall bestow on me all that is wanting."

It may here be remarked, that by assiduous attention to his business, seeking in this humble state of mind to benefit his fellow creatures while he made a living for his family, he was successful, and the dew of Heavenly good ceased not to rest upon him.

On the 28th of the 2nd month, 1794, the event so ardently desired was accomplished, with the approbation of all who were concerned in the welfare of the parties.

Under the new and exhilarating inducements which now existed for the right exertion of his powers, he applied himself with greater diligence to the performance of all his duties. Prosperity, which in well regulated society is mostly attendant on industry, integrity, and prudence, as we have observed, was his reward; and this attracted the attention of men of capital, by one of whom an offer was made to him which deserves, with its sequel, to be recorded. The individual alluded to offered him the use of a large

sum of money, for which he required no security; and he also relinquished the right to a voice in its management, only expecting as a remuneration one half of the profits on this amount. In one aspect, the offer was a very tempting one. Edward Stabler was engaged at the time in a lively trade, in which more capital than he possessed might have been profitably employed; and the confidence placed in his integrity and judgment, was highly flattering to his feelings; but deliberate reflection, confirmed by the advice of Thomas Pleasants when he commenced business, that he should never place his character and happiness at the mercy of another, determined him respectfully to decline the proposition. It was happy for him that he did so; for this individual afterwards became insolvent, and the consequence to Edward Stabler would have been the loss of all his property.

Another circumstance may be mentioned which brought the matter of *business* into serious review, and was the means of his adopting a principle of action from which we believe he never deviated. He received information that a Friend in a distant city who stood high in religious society, and in the mercantile community, who was also extensively engaged in trade, had failed to meet his engagements. Upon receiving this account, he reflected upon his own humble qualifications, as he deemed them,—and the comparison between himself and this Friend overwhelmed him with distress. If this man, he thought, with great abilities and high reputation, could not

sustain the trials of business, his own portion would surely be insolvency. But whilst he was contemplating this discouraging prospect, the pure principle of Truth which ever attends the honest heart as a counsellor and a source of strength, opened to his mind a view which banished all his fears. He saw that a course of strict prudence and justice would save him from destruction, by keeping his business within the limits of his means.

In after life, while pursuing conscientiously this moderate course, he saw many, from a different rule of action, rise much higher than himself on the scale of riches, who afterwards sunk into ruin. It were well if all would reflect upon the disastrous influence which one error in the choice of principles may have upon their happiness, and the perfect security which attends them when they make the right selection, and are thus shielded from harm under the wing of Heavenly goodness.

About the year 1798, Edward Stabler was appointed to the station of Elder by the monthly meeting of Fairfax, of which the Friends in Alexandria were at that time members. As their number had much increased with the rising prosperity of the town, and as Fairfax monthly meeting was held at the distance of forty-five miles, it was thought right to request the establishment of a monthly meeting in Alexandria; which request, after proper deliberation, was granted, and the meeting was opened on the 23rd of the 9th month, 1802. In the many transactions in which the

subject of this memoir was engaged for the support of the testimonies of Truth, and the good order of society, his conduct was such, both in affording encouragement to the weak, and in endeavouring to reclaim wanderers from the path of rectitude, as secured the confidence of the circle of Friends with which he was connected. The following letters, addressed to two female friends, exhibit the interest he felt at this time in religious concerns, and will form a connecting link between the uncertainty that still clouded his vision, and those luminous views which he afterwards received of the spiritual nature of the christian religion.

Alexandria, 29th of the 8th month, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

It has now been better than a week since I was favoured with thy very satisfactory letter, and I think thou wilt believe me when I say, it has not been for want of sincere affection on our part, nor a due sense of the favour conferred on us, that it was not immediately answered. My employment in business has for three or four months past been uncommonly confining, owing to my young man's infirm state of health which ultimately reduced him to the necessity of quitting the business about six or eight weeks ago, and which has consequently left me without an assistant at the most busy season of the whole year. To this may be added, as a still more important reason—a consciousness that I am disqualified to say any

thing to thee that would merit the appellation of good, even in the smallest degree. Like other men who have had a chance of education, and who have been favoured with the advantages of cultivated society, I could write or utter words upon many subjects; and this was, at one time of my life, a great source of enjoyment, when I may say sounds were mistaken for things, and ideas fitly arranged were misapprehended for wisdom. But succeeding and anxious experience has convinced me that this is vanity, and that something of an entirely different nature must be attained, or sensibility will be racked with anguish for want of enjoyments suited to its nature and capacities. I have known the possession, for a time, of that invaluable blessing, and have been occasionally favoured with a transient renewal of its visitations; under the influence of which, the glorious nature of the pure birth was clearly apprehended, and an exulting willingness was felt, I trust, to give all things for it,—answering, as I conceive, to the prophetic declaration, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” As such manifestations abound with consolation beyond any thing merely natural, to be left again to the undignified enjoyments of sense, is more depressing than never to have known that superior felicity.

I mention this because it has been mostly my situation to feel stripped of this higher consolation, and surrounded with apprehensions that I should be eventually forsaken, and found unworthy to participate in the saints' rest, either here or hereafter. At other times I

have thought I received a conviction, that this tribulated path was the right one, and something like a language of encouragement to persevere unto the end, which should yet be blessed. Could I be assured that these sufferings were not the result of my own evil propensities, or punishments from Divine displeasure, I think I could submit to them with perfect willingness; especially as it appears clear from the same record that, like the Captain of our salvation, we must be "made perfect through sufferings." It will not surprise thee to find me unqualified for writing well in such a state of mind, and thou wilt probably think with me that the task is considerable to write at all; but if I am not censured by thee for attempting it, I shall be satisfied.

Thy letter to E. J. gave us the first information of your safe and peaceful arrival at home. This—as we feel no common interest in what concerns thee and our friend E.—was to us glad tidings; though I must confess not quite so gratifying as the enjoyment of your company under our own roof. When we have had the society of our dear friends at our house, I have thought our situation might be compared, in a degree, with that of Obed-Edom, in whose house the *ark* was lodged; for the sake of which it is declared that he and all he had were blessed.

Friends in this place are generally well; and our Quarterly meeting has thought proper to trust us with the management of a monthly meeting. It appears to me a very important charge, and I hope we may be

favoured to hold it to the honour of Truth; for I think I am sensible that wisdom of a higher nature than our own, will be necessary to keep it from being a reproach.

I am affectionately thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

10th of the 2nd month, 1804.

DEAR FRIEND,—

The receipt of thy agreeable letter revived in my recollection a sentiment which has often been as an anchor to my mind in times of great mental conflict and distress, which is, that to such of us as may through Divine help be favoured to arrive at the haven of rest, the scene through which we here pass with so great difficulty, will wear, on looking back, an appearance entirely different; forasmuch as those dispensations which have been most afflicting, will probably be found to have wrought more effectually to our purification than any others. And though we are too apt to think the lesson of obedience hard to learn where distress is the teacher, yet in my best moments I am strong in the persuasion that we could not be taught it by any other. The disciple is not above his Lord, nor the servant above his master; and if it be indeed true, that "it became *him* for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the *captain* of their salvation perfect through *sufferings*," can we expect to be perfected in any other manner? The pathetic language of prophecy declares him to have been "a man of sorrows and acquainted

with grief;”—that “he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth;” and it would seem that the Divine Spirit, foreseeing the nature of our temptations, and that it would be suggested that *his* trials and *ours* materially differ,—has condescended to declare their sameness by the mouth of the highly favoured apostle who saith, “we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted *like as we are.*” And what has appeared at some times truly wonderful to my mind is, that none of these things were for *his own*, but *all for our sakes*: as the prophet expresses, “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” From which instances of transcendent regard towards us, another comfortable proof arises, that he does not oppress us with unnecessary afflictions; but these things are requisite means which work for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” as they lead us to “look not at the things that are seen which are temporal, but at the things that are not seen which are eternal.” I do not often feel myself qualified to say much on subjects of this nature, having, for the greater part, to labour under much poverty in my spiritual journey; and at such times I seem to be altogether solitary, with none to help me; though I have known from certain experience, at other times, that this is the alone highway for the ransomed to walk in.

May I not hope that it may be some consolation to thee, my sister, to receive a fresh assurance from even a weak brother, that there are, and have been many who can subscribe to the truth of, perhaps, all thy trials in their own experience? and who can also say from some degree of comfortable evidence, at other times, that they "know their Redeemer liveth." The perusal of thy letter was, to me, somewhat like "deep uttering unto deep;" it awakened afresh that sensibility of my own weakness, surrounded with dangers which called to watch; and I trust, through Divine assistance, that it may be instrumental to arouse me to a more active attention; for our adversary is indeed an unwearied one, and the inmost recesses of our hearts are the scene of his allurements: but through the mercy of him who gave himself for us, the preserving power is equally near us, and I am persuaded often sustains us when we know not how, even so as to give us the victory over all the besetments of evil, and, for a time, to establish our goings in his light, giving rise to an experience emphatically described in the language of the apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? nay; in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

In near regard, farewell.

EDWARD STABLER.

In the latter part of 1804, he spent some months as a care-taker and companion of Ann Alexander, from

England, and her female associate, who paid a religious visit in the Southern States. The hold which religious impressions had taken upon his mind, was strengthened by the occurrences of this journey. He thus recounts some of his feelings in a letter addressed to his wife: "We have attended six meetings among those of our own society, besides one which A. A. appointed in a little town. They were all trying and very exercising times; the people appearing in a general way scarcely capable of religious apprehension: nor is it to be wondered at, when we attend to the sensations which impress our minds as we pass up and down among them. In many instances, it appears as though we were almost in the confines of *the shadow of death*, as it relates to the spiritual life which is hid with Christ. They appear most eminently to be slighting their own mercies, both in temporal and spiritual concerns, from the exceeding hardness of their hearts towards the poor, afflicted black people. The most comfortable times we know, are on the road; and then our situation is as much so as it can be when we are travelling. The various interesting subjects of literature and religion form the topics of our conversation, and sometimes instructive passages from poets and historians are read to deceive the solitary way. The recollections of the many interesting scenes of our mutual endearment in our beloved family, and the solemn, affecting *farewell* when I parted with my precious treasures, all rush upon me at this moment, and dissolve my heart with inexpressible tenderness. Oh! that the kind Author of every mercy may hold you

in the arms of his love, and preserve you from every evil!"

During the progress of the experimental knowledge of the Truth, with which he was favoured about this period of his life, he found it required of him to withdraw from a society, though it had been established for a benevolent purpose, and to keep aloof from all human institutions, whether civil, political, or moral. The effort that severed him from this society which he had been active in forming, was humbling and painful; but the reward of obedience to the intimation of duty was an increase of light and peace.

In the year 1805, his sympathies were called forth, and his excitable temperament brought low by the illness of his brother William, who departed this life, after protracted suffering, in the first month of the following year. In the 7th and 12th months, he wrote thus to his brother and sister: "Under great depression of spirits, what can I say to you that will either soothe your sorrows, or enable you to bear them with fortitude? We are getting our place ready, and expect to be there in this week or the beginning of next, where you shall have a cordial welcome, and the best that we can do for you. I think, if it can be done without inconvenience, our son had better come with you, as it is too much to have the additional trouble of caring for him in your affliction. I shall write to Beverdam after I hear from you again, when I could *sincerely hope* to convey more pleasing tidings; but a *greater and more interesting* desire is to have my own natural will sub-

jected, and to say, both with the mouth and heart, 'thy will be done.' My heart sympathizes with you, more than my tongue or pen can express. Affliction is indeed a 'bitter cup;' but infinite wisdom cannot judge amiss, nor infinite mercy afflict but for our good. The heavenly tranquillity and resigned situation of mind, with which my dear brother is favoured under circumstances so awful, are worthy of grateful commemoration. That all-bountiful *Power* which thus makes bare his arm for the assistance of the poor, and graciously opens his ear to the sighing of the needy, will no doubt support him through the remaining trials, until he is landed on that blissful shore where all tears are forever wiped from all eyes."

About the present period, he was favoured with a knowledge, by internal evidence, of the true and spiritual nature of the christian religion, and in reference to former experience he felt that he could now exclaim with the patriarch Job, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." In the enjoyment of this delightful vision, he could hardly persuade himself that an outward light, above that of the sun, did not shine around him, as he followed his daily avocations. While this state continued, he imparted his views of it to many of his friends, as opportunity offered, and found that their feelings became dipped into sympathy with his own. He now perceived that the Divine manifestation which had thus visited his mind, was the "beloved Son" in whom the Father is "well pleased"—who, unknown

to him, had been with him all his life; and an intimation accompanied the discovery, that he would have to declare this truth to his fellow-men.

In the 6th month, 1806, he made his first appearance in the ministry. To prepare him for this service, he passed through many and deep baptisms. In the midst of these, the world and its enjoyments were stripped of the false glory with which his youthful imagination had clothed them. An awful trial also awaited him, which, in its accomplishment, broke his attachment to the earth at its tenderest point, and had well nigh prostrated both his mental and physical powers. This event was the sudden death of his amiable wife, which occurred in the 9th month of the same year, and left him with five children to take care of, the eldest of whom was about eleven years old. As descriptive of her worth, and his sense of the loss he had sustained, we insert the following memorandum, made by his own hand in the Family Register, a few days after her departure; and truly, if the concurrent testimony of all who knew her may be depended on, she was worthy of this pathetic lamentation.

“My dearest Mary Stabler, the mother of the above named children, the sweet companion in all my joys, and endeared soother of all my sorrows, departed this life on the 20th of the 9th month, 1806, in the evening, at or near nine o'clock. Fervent indeed was the affection which subsisted between us, and unutterably tender was our sympathy for each other. To me she was a crown and bright diadem—a wise

counsellor in every difficulty,—and a brilliant sceptre upon which my heart could always lean with inexpressible confidence in every affliction. From the period when she became my beloved companion until the solemn close of time, every action and almost every word manifested the dominion of that Principle in her mind, the proper fruits of which are meekness, patience, innocence, and Divine charity,—and I doubt not—Oh! I cannot doubt that she is an inmate of that region where the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

In a letter to his sister-in-law, a few weeks after this mournful event, he thus expresses his desolated feelings. “My spirits are, as usual, depressed as low as possible, and every emotion of mind which can have a tendency to keep them so, appears to have undivided dominion over me; but chiefly the idea of my *lost love* seems to embitter every prospect, and renders my life a scene of uninterrupted wretchedness. I think it is now too plain that I loved *her* with an idolatrous affection. She was too much the centre of all my thoughts,—too entirely my *whole treasure*, or I should find some alleviation, some “day spring from on high,” to refresh and correct the weaknesses and wanderings of my heart. But as there is no help vouchsafed to me, I cannot do otherwise than submit in the best manner that my nature will admit of, which is I fear in an improper manner.”

The following letter was written a few months after the foregoing, and continues the same melancholy strain. It was addressed to a female friend who, like

himself, had travelled in the vale of sorrow: "Think not, my dear sister, seeing I have received two precious communications from thee, and have as yet made no reply, that I am therefore insensible of thy kindness, or ungrateful for thy sympathy. My emotions are far, very far different from this; and I fervently wish it were in my power to demonstrate my gratitude by making thee a suitable return; but my situation is generally such as to make mourning and lamentation the native language of my heart: and why should I, by uttering its dictates, increase thy sorrows? Perhaps the time may come, when Divine compassion will remove the dreadful rod of affliction from my tribulated spirit, and enable me experimentally to speak of *mercy*, as well as of *judgment*. Should this ever be the case, and permission be granted, I will with joy make thee a participator of the *good things*; but I desire no human being to partake unnecessarily of the *wormwood* and the *gall*: these I know are bitter, mournfully bitter;—so much so, that under their influence the "soul chooseth strangling and death, rather than life." But the Most High hath an *end* to accomplish in all these things. He is righteous; and I desire the prayers of all who can feel for and pity me, that I may be enabled to sustain the *awful trial*, until his righteous purposes are effected in thy poor desolate friend

E. S."

But this deep affliction which he mourned with so much feeling and submissive hope, and during which the Divine presence was mostly veiled from him, at

length performed its office. His soul had drunk the last of the bitter cup, and it pleased his Heavenly Father to send the "angel" of comfort to "minister unto him." He was now sensible that the object of this severe trial was to purify his spirit from the things of earth, and bring it into closer communion with God—and in the fullness of joy at the conviction, he could truly say, "not my will, but thine be done!" This delightful state however was only as a brook by the way, to solace his way-faring soul on the journey of spiritual life.

Towards the close of the year 1807, in obedience to apprehended duty, he engaged, in company with two Friends from a distant monthly meeting, in a religious visit to the families constituting the meeting to which he belonged. This service was accomplished to the satisfaction of his friends, and resulted in the enlargement of his gift in the ministry. Soon after the completion of these visits, he engaged in a similar concern to the families of Friends in Baltimore. He now resumed his station in business at home; for which his trials had long disqualified him; his children being under the care of Deborah, the widow of his brother William Stabler, and his family consisting of a house-keeper and two apprentices. His public appearances, though seasonable, clear, and impressive, had not been frequent; but now his sphere of labour became enlarged, and those characteristics of his gift were manifested, which afterwards rendered it so eminently valuable.

It is believed that in the preparation for usefulness, few have passed through more humiliating seasons than he did; for, in proportion to the exaltation of the Divine gift, was often the abasement of the natural man.

In 1807, during one of those times of despondency, in a letter to his sister-in-law Deborah Stabler, he thus expresses himself: "Almost as soon as I got within view of the city of Washington on the day that I left thy house, my usual attendant, *low spirits*, began to take possession of my mind,—without any cause that I know of;—which gradually increased until I arrived at home, and then settled into that habitual mourning of heart which has been so constantly the associate of almost every hour of my life, for the last fifteen months. I endeavour to submit to it with as much patience and resignation as possible;—desiring at seasons that I may be blessed in the end with that purity of soul which these afflictive dispensations are probably designed to effectuate." In another, written about the same period, he says, a Friend "very unexpectedly and very acceptably attended our meeting last fifth-day. Her testimony reached and tendered my heart, which before was *hard* as the "nether millstone." Such are the privileges of those who have the liberty of sitting with "the children," and partaking of the "crumbs which fall from their table." My mind has been, perhaps generally, more calm than it was *before*; yet still I mostly feel as an outcast both from heaven and earth, with no joy either *present*, or in *prospect*. I am, with

love to my precious children—the *dear* representatives of their *dearer* departed mother,—and to thyself and children, thy affectionate brother,

EDWARD STABLER.”

His health being now re-established, and his usual attention to business resumed, his spirits emerged from the deep gloom that had shaded them so long; but the enjoyments of the domestic circle were still wanting. Duty to his children, and a proper estimate of his own comfort, induced him therefore, in due time, to seek for another companion. He was actuated by a desire to move properly in a matter so important; and having weighed it seriously himself, he obtained the consent and approbation of all concerned. The second object of his choice was Mary, the daughter of William Hartshorne, a Friend who resided near Alexandria,—and, on the 28th of the 7th month, 1808, according to the order of the Society of Friends, he was united to her in marriage. This connexion realized the highest hopes of himself and his friends, for the second wife proved truly a help-meet to him, and a kind mother to his children.

His gift of the ministry, which was feelingly acknowledged by Alexandria monthly meeting in the 10th month, 1808, and in due time by Fairfax Quarterly meeting of ministers and elders,—now became further enlarged; and he frequently felt himself drawn, during the remainder of his life, to travel abroad in the service of the gospel; and also to labour among his

friends at home, both as a minister and in the administration of the salutary discipline of the society. The sphere of his labours was chiefly in the Northern, Eastern and Middle States of this Union.

In the exercise of the discipline, two subjects repeatedly engaged his attention during the period between the commencement of the year just mentioned and the early part of 1810. The first was a neglect in the attendance of religious meetings, which had been noticed in a minute from the Quarterly meeting. On the introduction of this subject to the attention of the monthly meeting, that body proceeded solemnly to deliberate upon it, and a committee was appointed, of which Edward Stabler was a member,—to visit all the families of the meeting, and to extend such admonition as the cases might require.

The second subject was the use of spirituous liquors. The necessity for action in this matter was a trial to the best feelings of the meeting;—and our friend Edward Stabler received an appointment (with a number of others) to labour affectionately with those who improperly used, or who dealt in this article. At the conclusion of their service, the committee reported that “the importation of spirituous liquors had nearly ceased, and that trading in them had very much declined among Friends since the last year;—that a sentiment in favour of our testimony was nearly general among those who had made them an article of trade; and from evidences of a desire to decline the trade altogether, they felt authorized to hope for a further advancement.” The services of the subject of this me-

moir on both these concerns, are believed to have been of great value; for his own deportment was strictly correct, and his heart was actuated by ardent desires for the happiness of his friends. Labour extended under such influences rarely, indeed we may say *never* fails to produce some good effect.

The use of ardent spirits as an article of drink, had before this time been common among Friends and others, and it was customary at weddings to furnish wine plentifully to the guests; but at the marriage of one of his valued friends, Edward Stabler united with him in the support of this testimony, and it was maintained, at that time, by withholding all intoxicating drinks from the wedding table. This circumstance was so singular as doubtless to induce an examination of the subject, and whether from this cause or not we cannot certainly determine, but the custom fell into disuse among Friends and other respectable people.

The two following letters afford evidence of the state of Edward Stabler's mind about this period. The first speaks of his feelings in regard to the services of the committee appointed to visit the families of the monthly meeting; and the second (which was probably written after a visit to his sister-in-law) gives further evidence of the deep probation through which he had to pass. Increasing spiritual light enabled him, however, to draw instruction and strength from his sufferings.

Alexandria, 10th of 1st mo. 1809.

DEAR SISTER,—

A committee of our monthly meeting (of which thy brother was one) has lately accomplished a general visit to the families of Friends. It has been a time of renewed strengthening and confirmation to my mind; so much so, that I thought I could experimentally adopt the language, "Day unto day uttereth *speech*, and night unto night showeth *knowledge*:"—and that not as it regards the revolution of the outward sun, but more impressively those seasons when the excellent presence of our holy Helper is veiled (as it relates to us) in darkness; or, as David expresses it, "when he maketh darkness his secret place, and his pavilion, thick clouds of the skies." And again, "At the brightness that was before him, his darkness was scattered."

These are indeed seasons of deep instruction, when the mind is enabled, through the excellent gift of faith, to remain quiet in every change, and behold his own works accomplished by his own power, both in the world and in ourselves. For assuredly such shall find the verification of the promise, that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease;"—and they shall learn to appreciate the value of every dispensation, knowing by experience that he is faithful who hath promised; and that though it may be expedient for us that he should go away, yet it is but to prepare a better place for us; and that he will come again, and take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also. And this I take to be meant not ex-

clusively of a final entering into "his rest," but that it is accomplished in every season when we are by his blessed Spirit baptized into a conformity with all his various states of suffering, as preparatory to a participation of his states of glorification.

Thy very affectionate brother,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 20th of 6th mo. 1809.

DEAR SISTER,—

I have nothing to say for myself that I know of—but that I have been since my return home very generally clothed with sackcloth,—which, as usual, I have not been able to hide as I should do, owing perhaps to the rents (which are too many) in the upper garments. I know not that the world is able to discover my real situation, or it might perhaps operate as a discouragement to those who are but beginners in the spiritual life. But as it is certain "the children of the bride-chamber cannot mourn while the bridegroom is with them," so it appears to me impossible that they should not fast and mourn when he is removed from them:—and perhaps the charge, "wash thy face, and anoint thy head, and appear not unto men to fast," has its fulfilment when we keep our sorrows to ourselves, without endeavouring to exhibit them to others to excite either their admiration or their sympathy; which appears to constitute *that* which is forbidden,—"*for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast.*" I believe there is more cause to rejoice than to grieve, when we can get low enough

to perceive that suffering and poverty of spirit are dispensed to us in regard to all our mental faculties, because they have so obviously a tendency to divest the mind of arrogance and self-sufficiency, and enable it to receive the most precious of all wisdom and consolation, the revelation of him who is "meek and lowly in heart." By this means true peace is found to the soul.

Please to tell M. that I often think of her for good, and not for evil. And let her not count it strange concerning the fiery trial which has and will come upon her to try her, for no strange thing hath happened to her—but the very same things are accomplished in every child of her heavenly Father. And as he knoweth the way that we take, when he hath tried us we shall come forth as gold,—which is (as I apprehend) divested of dross. And as gold has to be melted again and again while there is any dross, or else it cannot come forth as pure gold, so it is with us. These fiery trials are sent for this very purpose, to burn up all the pride and wickedness of our nature; and they must be repeated as often as there is any of it to consume; "For he that *now* letteth will let (that is, the obstruction to our progress will continue,) until the man of sin be fully revealed," not in part only, but "*fully*." And this we know cannot be done at once, therefore he that letteth or obstructeth *now*, will continue to let or obstruct, until the very last part of the sinful principle is revealed; and then, as he did to the *first* he will also do to the *last*, "he will consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the

brightness of his coming. Then the triumphant situation will follow, which all this "war and rumour of war" was producing, viz: "All old things shall be done away, and all things shall become new, and all things of God." Here then, "is the patience and faith of the saints,—that they endure this fight of afflictions, keeping their wills steadfast on the Lord's side, and then, whatever may happen, it will be well with them."

Farewell, affectionately,

EDWARD STABLER.

In the 4th month of the year 1810, he obtained a minute to visit the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Virginia, and to attend to some religious services within the limits of Cedar Creek monthly meeting, in company with his sister-in-law, Deborah Stabler. The service was performed; and in the 6th month of the same year, he returned the minute with an endorsement made by direction of the Yearly Meeting, stating that his company and gospel labours had been acceptable and edifying.

While engaged in this journey he wrote the following letter to his wife:

Petersburg, 5th mo. 17th, 1810.

We have not had leisure at any time since we left home and when we were within reach of a post office, to write to thee; but my dear Mary may be assured that she and our precious little ones have often, very often been the subjects of my thoughts; and as I have no doubt that thy meditations have equally dwelt on

us, I feel it incumbent on me to embrace the first leisure to inform thee of our progress.

We have come thus far without accident, and with my mind much more at ease than I could have expected, considering the situation in which I left our little Mary. But a constant hope has been present, that her fever would be of short continuance; and as the sense of duty in regard to the visit in prospect, has continued to clothe my mind, I think with increasing clearness, I have been made the more easy to be absent from home; believing that I left thee, my dear children, and my business, under the protection of a kind Providence who has always blessed me beyond my merits. My sister and myself have both enjoyed uninterrupted health, and are now so used to travelling that we are pretty much without fatigue.

We are now in the house of an old acquaintance in Petersburg, where I first drew the breath of this life. And though I count it a matter worthy of gratitude, that every person who ever knew me seems glad to see me again, even the black people, yet it does not feel like home, nor are there any of those kindred emotions which the heart delights to feel, where with an outward acquaintance there is also a unity of soul.

I shall feel very anxious when I return to Richmond, to receive a particular account of every thing pertaining to my precious family, and also of thy journey to the Quarterly meeting, and our sister Rebecca Miller's health.

Love salutes you all from thy very affectionate husband,

EDWARD STABLER.

Between the 4th month of the year 1810 and the 1st month of 1813, he was again several times engaged in service, as a member of committees, on deficiencies in the attendance of meetings, and some remaining delinquencies in the support of our testimony against the improper use of spirituous liquors. The report of one of these committees to the monthly meeting in the 7th month, 1810, concludes with the following expressions: "The affectionate manner in which our visits were generally received, together with the state of Divine favour afforded to our minds while engaged in paying them, have encouraged us to hope that a renewed attention to the important duty of attending meetings, will become the concern of those we have visited. In regard to the other subject we can only say, we believe our testimony is not losing ground."

That Divine favour is afforded to the mind while engaged in acts of duty, is a truth, not only confirmed by the experience of the subject of this memoir, as here recorded, but by that of all virtuous men. The holy scriptures abound in evidences to this truth, from the life of the first man to that of the last whose experience is recorded in the volume. Indeed the evidence is so clear, that the human soul communicates with its Heavenly Parent, that the wonder is how any rational being can doubt the fact. Some reject the proffered instruction, and thus acknowledge its offer; and in some the voice of the internal monitor is drowned in the tumult of passion and excitement: but when the cool of the evening succeeds to the heat of the day, the voice of reproof, of instruction, of persuasion, is

heard again. On this Divine communion, and obedience to the will of God thus immediately revealed, depends our present and everlasting happiness.

The obligation to attend religious meetings, is a subject which has long engaged the minds of Friends concerned for the welfare of the Society. It stands on the same foundation with our duty to perform other acts of righteousness, to wit, the love of God, and the love of man; and until this blessed feeling acquires dominion in the heart, the service can never be rightly performed. A full conviction of this truth was the moving spring to the actions of Edward Stabler in all his religious undertakings. At an early period of his religious course, after his mind had received the first awakening visitation of Divine love, this subject deeply interested his feelings; and in the contemplation of it while under a preparation for the gospel ministry, his soul being absorbed in heavenly love, it followed him in sleep and prompted the most delightful visions.

The foundation assumed above for religious worship, may seem to be narrow and exclusive; but its verity is sustained by the experience of all who have tasted of Divine communion. Many are attracted to the house of worship by curiosity;—some, by a desire to see and to be seen;—others are impelled by the force of habit, or the influence of tradition, or superstition;—the acknowledged influence of superiors may insensibly command the youthful mind;—and some may be moved by the desire of applause, or the hypocritical workings of self-interest. In all these cases, and in every other we may justly say, “verily they have their reward:”

but the "dew of Hermon" will only descend upon that mount "where the Lord *commandeth* the blessing."

In the year 1812, during a war in which the United States were engaged, the exactions of military power became a subject of concern to the monthly meeting, because it was feared that some of the flock might waver in the support of our righteous testimony against that great evil. A committee was appointed, of which Edward Stabler was one, to pay such attention to the subject as it might require. Their report introduced the meeting into solemn exercise; and the members individually were affectionately advised, diligently to examine whether they were duly attentive and obedient to the monitions of Truth against uniting in war, or in any way yielding to military requisitions. It appeared by a subsequent statement of the committee, that eleven Friends had suffered by the loss of property, and two by imprisonment; and that the members were generally faithful in the support of our religious testimonies. The above sufferings are not recorded because the Society of Friends believe themselves peculiar subjects of distress in war. We know that the consequences, moral and physical, are generally calamitous, both to individuals and nations; and we cannot therefore but desire the advent of that glorious day, in which the "people shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks," when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Isaiah, c. ii, v. 4.

The letter which follows, gives some account of the condition of Alexandria at one time during the war, viz :

Alexandria, 9th mo. 21st, 1814.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

To sympathizing minds like yours I need not say how grateful your letter was to my feelings, though I was away from town at the time of its arrival, and engaged in the (to nature) mournful employment of nursing three sick children; two of whom were *ill*, and one extremely so. But all thanks to the gracious Preserver and Protector, they are all so far on the recovery as to leave my mind free from anxiety on account of their sickness. Equally to be commemorated, and with equal gratitude to the same Divine Power (since it was he alone to whom we were indebted for it) is the preservation of our city from outrage and pillage; at any rate, from such a degree of it as was to be expected from persons coming in the character of enemies. No personal insult, nor even indecorum was offered to the inhabitants,—their dwellings were not visited, nor their household property molested. They took flour, tobacco, cotton, groceries, and shipping, to an amount it is supposed of less than two hundred thousand dollars; which is a loss so very inconsiderable, compared to what we might have suffered, that it really looks astonishing when I reflect upon it. But greatly consolatory and confirming (in relation to the rectitude and efficacy of that kind of conduct which is the fruit of christian principle) is the consideration of the means made use of by Divine

Goodness to produce this marvellous preservation.—The previous attack on Washington had called away from Alexandria all the military men and military apparatus; so that when the English squadron arrived before the town, there was nothing in the power of the remaining citizens but to meet them in the spirit of unresisting negotiation. By *this* course, all irritation on both parts was prevented; and instead of the “confused noise and garments rolled in blood,” which characterize the warrior and his employment, and which there is abundant reason to apprehend would have been the consequence, had there been a military force here on their arrival,—their conduct was respectful and decorous; and instead of that exultation and triumph which expands the heart of a soldier when he encounters and overcomes a force like his own, these were evidently dejected and averse to what they were doing; and the officers, upon more occasions than one, expressed that they “felt like robbers and scoundrels” in thus taking away the property of unoffending individuals.

“These are the Lord’s doings, and are marvellous in our eyes.” And as he is able to protect to the uttermost, he is worthy to be trusted in, yea, though he should in his infinite wisdom see meet to permit a scene of desolation yet to be our portion, his blessed power is able to make “all things work together for good” to those who love him. And I feel thankful for the desire which now pervades my heart, that he may not permit “tribulation, or distress, or nakedness,

or famine, or peril, or sword," to separate my spirit from his love.

I often think of a number of my dear friends in Wilmington, and always with affectionate desires for their welfare. The little company which so often met us at your house, I wish to be remembered to individually.

For yourselves, I think you both know that I love you with that degree of sincerity which enables me to subscribe myself, with much truth of affection,

Your friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

The death of a beloved sister-in-law called forth the following letter:

Alexandria, 12th mo. 25th, 1812.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

I have it not in my power to do more than share affectionately in your sorrows, on the mournful event of which thy last letter apprised me. I nevertheless feel a near sympathy for all the near connections of our dear deceased sister;—and the fervent desire of my heart is that they may be supported and enabled to "glorify their Lord in the fires;"—not doubting that all will be found in the end to "work together for good."

These awful and afflicting privations are indeed terrible to flesh and blood! When the earth is thus shaken at the point of its dearest attachment, who can feel the commotion and not tremble? But the sublime and ever interesting truth is, that there remains some-

thing through it all "which cannot be shaken;"—and the less *that* is encumbered, the more rapidly will it ascend to "where it was before" it became a birth in our nature. And as it is thus lifted up in any human soul, there it will lead captivity captive, and give gifts unto such; even new and precious gifts of knowledge, love, purity, and holiness;—that where it is in its kingdom, there they may be also.

I think my mind had a presage, upon parting with thee and our dear children, of something that would be trying to our tenderest feelings. I do not recollect that I ever parted with you before, with the same kind of sensations,—which evidently included a supplication for your preservation—and I think, not more for my own dear child than for the rest of you. A renewal of this clothes my mind now while I am engaged in addressing thee; and I desire, with much sincerity of affection for you, and concern for myself, that the various dispensations of infinite Wisdom towards us, may produce that entire dedication of heart to his requirements, which will lead us to behold the hand of a most merciful Parent in all which he permits to befall us.

Thy affectionate brother,

EDWARD STABLER.

In the 4th month of the year 1814, Edward Stabler obtained the unity of his friends with a prospect of visiting the Yearly Meeting of our brethren of New York; and also of appointing such meetings on his way as might, in the openings of Truth, appear to be his duty. The service was performed to his satisfac-

tion, and that of the Friends he visited, as appears by their endorsement on his minute. While on this journey, he wrote the following letter to his wife:

Philada., 6th mo. 7th, 1814.

Thy two letters, my dear Mary, of the 30th of last month and the 3rd of the present, I received to-day on my arrival in this city; and while I acknowledge my gratitude to the Fountain of Divine Goodness for your general welfare, I feel the current of my tender affection to flow toward thee and my precious children. After I wrote from New York, my time became so much occupied as to afford no leisure to write again until now.

I attended all the sittings of the Yearly Meeting in New York, and on second-day left that city for Locust Grove; and the next day attended a meeting at Rahway which was appointed for our friend Micajah Collins and myself. The next day we attended a meeting at Plainfield, where, as at Rahway, there was a large assembly of people. From Plainfield we went to New Brunswick, where a meeting was appointed for us in the evening; and the next morning we were at Friends' meeting at Stony Brook, and in the evening attended a meeting at Princeton, appointed for the town's people. It was largely attended, and eventually proved a solemn and edifying season.

I felt the separation from several dear friends who parted from me at Trenton, as a trial; for their company and the unity of their spirits had been exceedingly comfortable to me. On coming to Abington in

Pennsylvania, information was diffused through the neighbourhood of our intention to be at meeting the next day, and there was a large collection of people, in whose minds an open door was found, and some of the precious truths of religion were largely opened to my own admiration, and received by the audience with that deep and solemn attention which I hope will, in some degree, prove an assurance that it will not be all lost labour. In the afternoon of the same day, we attended a large public meeting appointed for us in Germantown, which appeared to be a hard, exercising meeting.

This morning we came to Philadelphia in time to attend the North meeting; where my precious Master favoured me to open and deliver to the audience (a very large one) some deeply interesting doctrines, relative to his own pure offspring in the minds of the children of men. Several concurrent testimonies were borne after me; and the meeting concluded under a precious covering of that solemnity which is the crown of our assemblies.

I should not mention a slight hæmorrhage which I have had, if I did not value the existence of that precious confidence which has always subsisted between us, and which ought to be maintained inviolate.

My love salutes all my precious children, and I am, my dear Mary, with much affection, thy own

EDWARD STABLER.

Among the subjects which were recommended by the Yearly Meeting of Baltimore, in the fall of 1814,

to the notice of the Quarterly and monthly meetings was that of schools; and the subject of our narrative was appointed one of a committee by the monthly meeting of Alexandria, to inquire into the practicability of establishing an institution of this kind under its control. The report of the committee (which was chiefly prepared by him) contains the following interesting views, viz:

“In deliberating on the subject of schools, the committee have been forcibly impressed with the very great importance and necessity of an increased attention to the subject generally; as the education of our precious offspring in those kinds of knowledge which eminently contribute to their becoming useful to themselves and others in this life, is unquestionably the most valuable patrimony in that respect which can be bestowed upon them. But when we contemplate the still more interesting consequences which are connected with the acquisition of literary and scientific knowledge, from the associations which are formed, and the examples which are exhibited to the susceptible and imitative minds of children, and the obvious tendency of these to foster and encourage the growth of tempers and principles, with all their extensive and powerful influences upon the virtue, the character, and the happiness of human beings, in all their relations,—we apprehend it would be difficult, if not impossible, to express in an adequate manner the great importance of securing to our children, by every practicable method, the advantages of a well ordered education. It must therefore be left with the minds of parents to reflect,

that as they value the welfare of their endeared offspring in every respect, it is incumbent upon them to attend with renewed interest to this important medium, through which so numerous a train of benefits or disadvantages may accrue to them.

The difference between an ignorant and a well-educated mind, is at once great and conspicuous. With natural talents of the same order, the one is confined to a limited sphere of usefulness, and is dependent upon others for many of the indispensable offices of social life; while the other by the acquisition of knowledge becomes capable of employment, productive not only of immediate and great advantages to himself, but his capacity for usefulness becomes in every respect proportionably extended in relation to his family, to his friends, to his neighbours, and to the world.

But the acquisition of knowledge may become an evil instead of a good, if it be derived through impure channels, or if it be associated with corrupt principles; and of this truth there are unhappily too many instances, which, as obvious examples, should operate to guard against those causes, which thus by a mournful perversion convert a blessing into a calamity, and change an instrument of so great usefulness into an agent of misery and corruption. This view impressively suggests the necessity of instituting select schools under well qualified teachers in membership with us, and to be superintended by committees of the Society, in every situation where it may be practicable. And though this may involve some increase of pecuniary expenditure, yet it is confidently believed, that in no

way could money be applied which would be productive of so valuable an interest to our offspring, as when thus disbursed for the purpose of storing their minds with useful knowledge and virtuous principles; upon the possession of which so large a share of comfort and enjoyment evidently depends."

The interest which was felt by the subject of this narrative in the welfare of his fellow-creatures, as his mind advanced in the path of righteousness, caused his feelings often to expand beyond the limits of his own religious society. Under an impression of duty, therefore, in the 4th month of the year 1815, he opened to the view of the monthly meeting, a concern which he had felt for some time to visit the Yearly Meeting of Rhode Island, then near at hand, and to attend and appoint meetings within its limits, as also within the verge of New York and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. This concern met with the sympathy and concurrence of his friends, and he was furnished with a certificate recommending him to proceed "under the influence of best wisdom."

This visit occupied about four months, and gave rise to the formation of acquaintances which continued to be subjects of pleasing reflection during the remainder of his life. He was favoured with the company of an elder from another monthly meeting, who was well qualified to hold up his hands in seasons of discouragement, and to guard him from the danger of self-exaltation by reason of the "abundance of revelations."

Some of the letters to his family, during this long absence, are preserved. They show the earnestness with which he was engaged in his Master's service,—the affection he felt for those among whom he travelled,—and the grief which at times found way to his heart on account of the separation from those he held most dear on earth. The following was written at New Bedford, in the State of Massachusetts, on the 19th of the 6th month, 1815.

“I received my dear Mary's letter of the 9th, the day I left Newport; and while I felt it as a cause for gratitude to the Divine Fountain, that thou and our dear little Sarah had been favoured to recover from your sickness, it made my heart ache to think I was so far from you, and that whatever might be the distress of any of my precious ones, I could not be near to afford that affectionate sympathy and assistance, which is so mutually grateful and consoling under the pressure of affliction. But I must leave the matter in the Divine Hand, and endeavour to trust to his kindness and goodness for your preservation.

The day after I wrote to thee from New York, we went on board the packet, and had a precious company of Friends along, who constituted a very pleasant society, and we were favoured with a fair wind all the way. I was not sea-sick, though I suffered some inconvenience for several days after I landed, from giddiness arising from the motion of the vessel.

I have been received with abundant kindness where ever I have been; indeed, in many cases it has been an inconvenience from the difficulty of putting by the

many invitations which could not be complied with. We came to this place on seventh-day last, where we were most hospitably entertained at the house of our kind friend William Rotch, junr., and indeed by all the rest of the Friends here. I attended two meetings here yesterday, which were large and satisfactory; and have appointed one to be held this evening for the inhabitants of the place. There are several meetings in this neighbourhood which I expect to attend, and shall probably have a meeting at Boston on next first-day, and afterwards at Salem; which, so far as I can now see, will be the extent of my eastern journey.

I do not find that absence in any degree abates my affection. My love is towards all my friends of Alexandria, and often does my mind visit them with affectionate solicitude and desire, that they as well as my own dear family may be preserved in the possession of those things which will contribute, in the greatest possible degree, to their happiness. To our relations I wish thee to present my affectionate remembrance, and to my dear friends as they inquire after me; but to John Janney and Elisha C. Dick, I wish to be remembered, whether they ask after me or not. I remember with gratitude the kindness and sympathy of my friends toward a poor, exercised brother. To my dear children and nephew Edward, the renewed expression of my love can hardly be necessary, though I feel it to flow towards them in an undiminished stream. To thee also it is not necessary to say, with how great sincerity of love I am thy own

EDWARD STABLER."

On the 20th of the 7th month, he wrote the following from Poughkeepsie:

“My last letter was written from Providence in Rhode Island on the 4th instant; since when we have gone regularly on, having meetings where the state of exercise pointed out the expediency and propriety of appointing them. We had a number in the State of Connecticut amongst the Presbyterians, I hope to some good effect; and one in the city of Hartford, which though very hard and exercising in the beginning, was nevertheless in the end, through Divine favour, crowned with a solemnity and state of feeling which I considered an abundant compensation for all I had gone through to obtain it.

The next day after I wrote my last letter to thee, I was taken with a hoarseness, I believe in consequence of getting wet in a shower, which rendered it difficult to speak above a whisper; and at that time I had four meetings appointed which were to be attended every day in succession for four days. My mind was much clothed with dejection in consequence of this disease, (but I was in good health in every other respect) on account of the apparent impossibility of speaking to an audience so as to be heard, if there should be any thing given me to communicate. But, blessed be the name of the Holy Helper, I was enabled, to my own admiration, in the very first meeting not only to speak audibly, but such was the solemn covering which was over us during a period of more than two hours, that when the meeting concluded in the usual way, the people all

kept their seats until Friends were nearly out of the meeting house. * * *

I know that I ought to resign you all to the protection of the Divine Parent, who has so long and so eminently preserved us through difficulties; but such is the ardency of my attachment to all of you, and so necessary is your preservation to my happiness, that I cannot at all times help indulging an over-degree of anxiety upon the subject. * * I expect to write to thee again from New York, when I shall probably have it in my power to mention with more precision where thou mayest direct to me afterwards. I shall expect to receive in New York, not only letters from thee but from my dear Elizabeth, or Anna, or William, or all of them.

Farewell, one and all; you are dearer than language can express to the heart of your affectionate

EDWARD STABLER."

The following letter was addressed to two intimate friends in Wilmington, Delaware, during this journey:

Foughkeepsie, 7th mo. 20th, 1815.

The kind salutation of my endeared friends met our hands at New Bedford; and the situation in which they know such poor wanderers as we are almost continually placed, will I know divest their minds of any umbrage at so much time having elapsed without noticing to them, in reply, the gratification which it gave us. You have been much the associates of my reflections since I parted with you, and your ideas have never been presented to the view of my mind, unaccompa-

nied by that friendly endearment which made them precious to my feelings.

The privilege of thus conversing with those we love by a medium purely spiritual, is indeed a great one, and the advantages which are thus mutually in our power, are really important. What a favour it is to a mind under the pressure of afflictive feelings, when the idea of an absent friend comes into view, and brings with it the recollection of a train of incidents which, for a season, dispel the gloom, and decorate the scene with new and vivid images, upon which reposing as upon a flowery bank in a wilderness, it becomes at once delighted and refreshed! Such, my dear friends, has often been the effect of my mental communion with you. And though I suppose we have not had to witness any thing in the course of our travels which is not "common to man" when thus engaged, yet we have found enough both of depression and affliction, as we have been introduced into a feeling with the situation of the precious "seed of the kingdom" in the hearts of the people, to make every cordial from heaven or earth truly acceptable.

We have had many meetings in different places among Friends and others; and through all have had cause to know that though of ourselves we can do nothing, yet we are made able "to do all things through Christ" when he is mercifully disposed to help us. And one thing I have had very frequently to observe with much interest, that however defective the members of our Society may be, and really are in faithfully maintaining our testimonies, and living according to

our high and holy profession, so as often to make our meetings when exclusively with them very dull and inanimate,—yet wherever Friends have long been settled, and we had meetings which have been largely attended by other people, there has been in almost every instance the most striking evidence of a preparation of heart among such (which was not to be found among those who had been without such an intercourse with our Society) for the reception of the truths of the gospel. Among such as these there was felt an open door, both in respect to feeling and communication, which was concurrently endearing and solemn; and this brings to my mind the expressions of the prophet, concerning the effects which follow where a “root of Jesse” shall stand for an ensign to the people: “Unto him,” he says, “shall the gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.”

It has been now a considerable time (almost a month) since I heard from my dear family, nor do I expect to hear from them until I get to New York, which will probably be a week longer. The last accounts stated them to be all in good health, except my youngest little boy who was poorly. My heart feels very anxious about them, but I endeavour to give them up as well as I may to the kind protection of the Divine Preserver; being abundantly assured that he is able, if it is seen best by his infinite wisdom, to keep them so that nothing shall happen to harm them.

If my cousin I. B. and his family have yet settled in Wilmington, please to remember my cousin R. and myself affectionately to all of them. It is likewise pre-

sented by both of us very affectionately to you, and to all inquiring friends among you; and I know you will believe the sincerity and truth of regard with which I am your friend, .

EDWARD STABLER.

A few years before the present period, two strangers from Boston, a young man in delicate health, and his wife, visited Alexandria, and were introduced to the family of Edward Stabler. Their attractions, both personal and mental, were above the common order, and a strong mutual attachment took place between the parties. A friendly correspondence was kept up after the departure of the strangers; and at the death of the young man which occurred in a short time, his widow sought relief from her sorrows in the sympathy of her distant friend. He intended to enjoy the satisfaction of paying her a visit on his late journey, but he was prevented in the manner related in the following letter.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 16th, 1815.

It was not less a disappointment to me, my beloved friend, than it appears to have been to thyself, that I did not get to see thee when at Boston—and I was only reconciled to the privation, by the circumstance of its being inevitable. I made as much inquiry concerning thee and the place of thy residence, as I well could, during my short continuance there, but received no information by which I could find either. I left Boston with regretful feelings on this account; for it was among the mournfully pleasing gratifications

which I anticipated when I had a prospect of being there, that I should probably see the *dear friend*, for whom a spontaneous attachment was felt from the first of our acquaintance.

In respect to the *severe*, the awful privation thou hast had to sustain (and of which I was early informed) in the loss of thy greatest earthly treasure, I can appreciate the state of thy feelings by the standard of my own afflictive experience. I have known, my beloved friend, *that sickness of the heart*, which turns from proffered pleasure with loathing, because of the loss of that endeared object of my affection which gave to all my joys their relish,—and for which all other things were chiefly desirable. But the ways of the Divine Parent, though often inscrutable, are always the result of infinite goodness, guided by infinite wisdom:—and surely it is not the least of his wonders that he often causes those distressing dispensations, so incomprehensible to the limited understandings of his creatures, to work for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” by detaching their attention in this way from the “things which are seen,” the most exquisite of which “*are temporal*,” in order to their becoming acquainted with those “things which are not seen,” and which “*are eternal*.” Among the former of these, the heart is acquainted with nothing which exceeds in value, or in the reality of possession, those precious connections which are the objects of domestic endearment. But how mournfully evident it is, that these also, “like the morning cloud and the early dew,” are transient and perishable;—and in

proportion to their loveliness and our consequent attachment to them, is the agonizing extent of that chasm which is left in the mind when they are taken from us. But in *the latter* and more sublimely interesting scene,—all is equally certain,—and all is durable. For as this world, with its changeable and fluctuating materials, is the region of the former,—which necessarily rises and falls—subsists and perishes—with the things upon which it is dependant;—so there is a spiritual region, with which we stand continually connected by our minds,—and with which (were we equally attentive to the impressions made upon them) we should know a communion, with as much certainty as we know the things of the outward world by attending to our outward senses.

An acquaintance with this is what the christian religion proposes:—it is what the illustrious Paul alluded to, by “the things which are not seen.” An intimacy with this enabled him to “glory in his tribulations,” and rejoice “in the cross of Christ,” by which the world was crucified to him, and he to the world! In this school he learned the delightful truth, “that though the outward house of this tabernacle dissolve, he had a house, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;”—and which, on account of its transcendent glory, qualified him to estimate the present afflictions which are lent for a moment, as not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed in him, when his attention became detracted from outward things.

And I am persuaded that the afflictions which are dispensed by the Author of mercy to the children of men, are intended for the benevolent purpose of calling the attention of their minds from the world which is without them, to that which is within them;—where the revelation of his spiritual wisdom is known, and his glories manifested,—where the soul is enabled to feed upon food appropriate to its nature,—to partake of “that bread which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world.” “Not (says our Saviour) as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.” To this blessed and all interesting scene of consolation, I can with confidence commend my dear afflicted friend, as unto a fountain most precious, from which light, and life, and joy, in a confluent current forever issue, as a “river of the water of life”—which first refines and then purifies,—ennobles and exalts the soul which drinks of its life-giving stream. It successively changes “from glory to glory,” until the entire transformation from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly, is accomplished:—and then cometh the glorious end when the Divine sovereignty is established in the human soul, and “God is all in all.” I think I am authorized by the affectionate feelings of my heart toward thee, to say that I always shall be, with great sincerity, thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

The feelings of our beloved relative had now become so deeply interested in the welfare of all within

the circle of his acquaintance, that he was much employed, during the remainder of his life, in devoting the rich treasures of his experience to their use.

Copies of some of his letters were retained by himself, and the originals of others preserved by those who received them. Of these letters we shall insert many in the remaining portion of this volume.

The following was addressed to a friend who was labouring under depression.

Alexandria, 10th mo. 24th, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I am renewedly confirmed in the sentiment, that thy impoverished and desolate state of feeling, so emphatically described,—is so far from being an evidence that thou art forsaken, that agreeably to my judgment it places thee in the situation so often pronounced *blessed* by infinite Wisdom. Who, my dear friend, can with truth be called mourners, but those who mourn? and thou knowest we none of us mourn without some cause, and that cause must be in its nature contrary to our desires. And when we sorrow because we are not as pure, as righteous, as heavenly-minded, as we wish to be, does not this very state demonstrate that purity, righteousness, and heavenly-mindedness, are the objects of our desires? To this state the Redeemer of the world has said, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their’s is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

It is by this process that our minds come to witness those seals to be opened, by which the mystery of godliness is "hidden from the wise and prudent,"—and that we learn the practical distinction between a mind rejoicing in its own righteousness, the work of its own hands, and that righteousness which is of God; and which, like the new heavens and the new earth, is erected upon the ruins of the old:—the first must pass away before the second can be established. And this glorious consummation, which is worthy of all the sacrifices that are made to obtain it, necessarily involves in its progress the destruction of many things to which the heart is attached. And as the precious consequences cannot be seen at the time of the sacrifice, it is no wonder that the mind is filled with lamentation, like "Rachel mourning for her children because they are not." Yet these are the immediate associates of the Redeemer's presence, who is by this way beginning and carrying on the work of the soul's redemption; gradually putting down all authority, all rule, and all power, that he may establish the Divine sovereignty in the heart, and that "God may be all in all." Under this state there arises that "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, (that is, divested of all impurity) upon either side of which grows the tree of life, that yieldeth her fruits every month, and the leaves thereof are for the healing of the nations."

It appears evidently to my mind, that this animating representation is proportionably realized in the experience of every individual, in whom the Divine Spirit comes in any degree to have the dominion; for as this

does unquestionably cleanse and purify the mind, the necessary effects of this purity are the growth and establishment of upright principles, which root out and destroy all that is evil, until the "wilderness becomes as Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord."

I remain affectionately thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

The following letters will explain themselves.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 10th, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Thy affecting account of the last interesting moments of thy young and amiable acquaintance, is indeed truly impressive: and when I was confined to a bed of languishing, with symptoms which rendered it not improbable that their farther progress might also terminate my mortal course, I had cause to commemorate with humility and gratitude, the mercy and goodness with which I was favoured at that solemn season by the fountain of Divine love.

My heart was repeatedly tendered by new and precious openings, which unfolded to my view the ground upon which the souls of the children of men are accepted in the Divine sight. "Not," says the illustrious Paul, "by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Answerable to this precious doctrine, when my mind looked toward any thing usually called good among men which I had ever done, so many equivocal circumstances were perceived relative both to the motives

and the execution,—and constituting a scene so fluctuating and unstable, that, like the opposite emblem of Noah's dove excluded from the ark, my spirit could here find no "rest for the sole of her foot." "When you have done *all* these things," said our blessed Redeemer, "say, we are unprofitable servants." How then could I derive consolation, or build a hope of acceptance upon the few, the very few which I had done,—when, to have done *all* and *perfectly*, was no more than my duty? I saw with unquestionable clearness, that this was not the foundation of acceptance; but that, like the old heavens and the old earth, this must pass away. The confidence of the mind must be withdrawn from these "filthy garments" of spotted and defiled righteousness;—and, being humbled before infinite purity, receive the ravishing boon of favour and acceptance, as his own gift. And when I was blessed with the feeling of this, and my heart was dissolved in gratitude for the inestimable benefaction, how clear was my perception of my own unworthiness! how exalted my view of his unbounded goodness! I rejoiced, not only in the refreshment which was thus immediately communicated by his presence, but *mediately* through that unspeakable feeling of unity and fellowship, which was also its offspring, with his children and people, both in time and eternity;—the same universal medium of life, love, and joy, being evidently comprehensive of all. And on this ground, my spirit exulted in the sweet assurance, that "by this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

LETTER OF EDWARD STABLER.

But, alas! my friend, such is my incapacity long to enjoy these precious fruits of the true Canaan,—that scarcely had convalescence began to take place, as it respected my disease,—before my mind was shrouded with dejection, and things as comparatively small as “the grasshopper, became a burden.” And though this state furnished a new and unquestionable evidence, that the former was indeed the bounty of heaven; yet the acuteness of present suffering was increased by the contrast, and distress became more intense, by being preceded by enjoyment.

I remain sincerely thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo., 1816.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

All the departments of life afford concurrent testimony to the certain rewards of obedience. And as I assuredly believe that no portion of our nature,—no circumstance of our lives, exists independent of the Divine Author,—so, the more attentively I consider his footsteps in the animal,—the intellectual,—and the spiritual concerns of man,—the more abundant and unequivocal is the conviction, that submission to his sovereignty, not only elicits the highest degree of good of which the *subject nature* is capable;—but the same act also suppresses the innumerable generations of evil and calamity, which would necessarily and successively have arisen under the influence of the opposite state.

This truth is impressively and beautifully included in the figure of Jacob's ladder. The top of it reached to heaven, but the foot was upon the earth. Consonant with this, we perceive that the lowest concerns of man,—the most subordinate powers of his nature, are sensible of the presence of a discriminating and rectifying principle—and are either blessed by obedience to its influence—or, refusing its direction, suffer from the domination of evil energies, which plunge their unhappy subject into every variety of distress. Nor is it less true by observation and experience, that faithfulness in the inferior, prepares the way to the enjoyment of principles of a higher order. The series which began on earth, is made to terminate in heaven, in the rapturous possession “of glory, immortality, and eternal life.” To this blessed consummation, even the offspring of evil—the family of pain—are made subservient by that “unwearied love,” which “is kind even to the unthankful and to the evil.”

Thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1816.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Let it be my important and pleasing engagement, as far as adequate power and intelligence are afforded, not to take thee out of the field of labour, where the plants of eternity are cultivated, but rather to encourage thy resolution, and invigorate thy efforts, faithfully to pursue in every situation, whether painful or pleasurable, the invaluable prize of immortality and eternal

life. That innocent purity of mind,—that confidence in the wisdom and goodness of an Almighty friend, which thou knowest to be so precious, and which have been found in times of trial to be as a rock among tumultuous waves—a resting place which could not be agitated by the storm—though all things else were in commotion around thee:—these constitute real treasures to the soul; and the cause which produces them is declared by the inspired writers “not to be far from every one of us.” “It is nigh thee, in thy heart, and in thy mouth.” It is described by the evangelist John to be a principle of life. And as our natural life is the cause why we can do or perceive any thing as natural beings, so this is the power in man by which only he is capable of knowing or pursuing the sublime treasures and enjoyments of goodness.

We are incapable of defining the principle of animal life, yet we bear it about with us;—we are perfectly conscious that we have it;—we feel its impulses and its restraints,—its pleasures and its pains. As its existence within us is vigorous, we feel our powers of perception and action proportionably vivid; as it declines, they diminish;—and when it forsakes us, we know that we must necessarily become insensible, and incapable of knowing any thing which pertains to it. Such also is the spiritual life, the life which was in Christ, which the scriptures declare is the light of men; yea, “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” From this arises every impulse we feel toward goodness. This renders us sensible of its nature, its loveliness, and its power of bless-

ing; and at the same time impresses our minds with a clear conviction of the harmful tendency of every principle within us which opposes its progress. The good and the amiable in all ages have been its followers:—by this they have been enabled to resist every incentive to evil,—to “endure the cross and to despise the shame”—until they have been made successively more than conquerors over every enemy which assailed them. As its heavenly instructions have been attended to, the energy of its life has increased, and the perceptions of the soul in relation to eternal things, have been clearer and clearer.

I am affectionately thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 21st, 1816.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

From the familiar intercourse of the Divine Principle with the children of men, too many unhappily form wrong estimates of its character,—become offended at its reproofs,—and turn away from its instructions. To them, of course, the wonders which it reveals,—the marvelous works which it performs, and the blessings which it secures to those who attend to its progress,—remain unknown and even incredible. As its influences are first perceived in relation to our outward affairs, (though its real access to us is by the spiritual portion of our being) a state of inexperience leads us to conclude that it is of earthly origin. (“Is not this the son of the carpenter?”) But as we are faithful to its directions in minor concerns, we are succes-

sively led to the perception of greater and more excellent things: and the same leader who was clothed in our view with the garments of mortality, while employed in dispensing directions concerning earthly things, becomes "transfigured before us"—in its more exalted operations, its "face shines as the sun, and its garments are white as the light." * * *

Let no partition wall divide between you and this heavenly principle,—no veil hide from you the glorious vision of the "King in his beauty." And when all adverse authority, and rule, and power, shall be put down, and the kingdom (the entire government) be delivered up to his father and your father, his God and your God,—then will mortality be swallowed up of life—and the crown of glory and immortality be yours. E. S.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 13th, 1816.

DEAR FRIEND,—

I have this day written to our common friend R. M.; having made an arrangement with a nephew of mine who is an active and intelligent merchant in this place, to make the experiment of selling his cotton on commission. Thou hast given me some pleasure in selecting me as an agent to render service to such a man as I take him to be—and it will be quite rejoicing if the experiment should result profitably to him. But that is not all for which I feel indebted to thee and thy D. Your correspondence is to me a treasure,—for which I wish it were in my power to make you a more adequate compensation *in kind*, than I feel is possible

to me. The feelings of my heart are indeed warm toward you;—and in that precious fellowship of love, which results from such a state, there is great facility of communion *in the spirit*. * * *

The distressing and disgraceful circumstances of *this* internal traffic in the people of color in our country, alluded to in thy last letter but one, is indeed a trying affair to human feeling,—especially the kidnapping part of the business. The scandalous defect of our laws,—and the criminal inattention (to say no more) of our legislators to a subject which is making such rapid progress in the destruction of the character, the humanity, and the morals of the country,—is indeed surprising. When I have looked towards it with a view to a remedy,—and seen how very small a portion of the evil can be removed by the most zealous efforts of the few, whose feelings are alive to its iniquity and its consequences, I have been almost at a loss to determine *whether any advantage is derived from so feeble an opposition to its course*;—for unquestionably the nature of things must change, or they who thus “sow to the wind,” will for their harvest “reap the whirlwind;”—which will speak to their experience in a voice too loud to be disregarded,—and too powerful to be resisted. And *when all that the friends of humanity can do, shall be done*,—I fear that the avarice and obduracy of America will *force this tremendous corrective upon them*. The general government has indeed acted nobly in annihilating the trade to Africa for slaves;—but the same thing is carried on in our own land, and no effort is made to deprive it of even its most horrid

features. It sickens my heart to reflect upon it;—and every idea I can form of justice, of mercy, of righteousness, and even of consistency of character,—is violated by the monstrous spectacle of laws, both social and political, which recognize the spirit of avarice *in one man* (and he perhaps among *the vilest and most worthless* of his species) as paramount to all the tender ties and invaluable interests of *conjugal, parental, filial, and fraternal love in another*: to say nothing of all the various interests which belong to him as a social being, and which are alike sacrificed by the same stroke. When I contemplate again the laws which govern the universe (and practically determine the *effects* which result from their *causes*) as issuing from a Fountain of Infinite Rectitude; the utmost violence must be done to my understanding, before it can appear otherwise than *impossible that any thing but distress and increasing calamity* can arise from such a state of things. We cannot expect to “gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles!”

My dear boys are abundantly sensible of your kindness, and return your affectionate salutation with great cordiality. My affectionate remembrance is presented to thy D., and your children—my cousin I. B. and family—and to all particular friends as if named—and after requesting thee to forgive me for sending thee so rough a scrawl,

I shall subscribe myself,

Thy very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 12th mo. 26th, 1816.

Thy last agreeable letter should have received an earlier answer, had I not, my dear friend, been almost indispensably engaged nearly ever since I received it. Among these engagements, one of the most interesting and important has been, attending to the gradual decline and death of my father-in-law, William Hartshorne, senr., whom we attended to the grave on the 14th inst., in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

I should with peculiar pleasure comply with thy request, to furnish thee with a memoir of my departed friend Benjamin Bates, jr., but I am without the materials which would seem to be necessary to compose such an one as would be proper. The time of our greatest intimacy was when we were both young, unmarried men. But after we became settled in life, the places of our residence were so remote that we very seldom met. And when I was most intimate with him, the qualities of his mind, and the dispositions of his heart were the principal objects of my attention and attachment; so that I do not recollect that I ever inquired or knew, in what county of Virginia he was born, or where. His qualifications, both natural and acquired, were certainly much beyond those possessed by the generality of men. In science, his attainments were principally by his own industry and application; but they were such as, in many respects, to entitle him to rank amongst the most learned men in our country. As a poet, his genius was chaste, correct, and copious; and I am persuaded, that *had not the vigor of his imagination and the ardor of his mind been restrained* by the

pure influence of divine Truth, he might have become illustrious in the world, as the Milton, or Homer of America. These rare qualifications were all clothed with so dense a veil of *modesty and humility*, that like a mine of precious metals, the hasty observer would not have detected their existence. But to those with whom he was intimate, they were successively disclosed in rich and varied profusion, which delighted at once, and enriched the confident of his friendship. But the "crown and diadem" of his character, in the view of those who knew him best, were constituted by his devotion to that vital Fountain of Righteousness, "the life that was in Christ." Under the tutorage of this "unspeakable gift," he became eminent for his benevolence to mankind,—blameless in his intercourse with them,—and actively vigilant in promoting their welfare:—nor was his homage less conspicuously demonstrated by his obedience to its impulsive, than to its *restraining* influence. With such talents as he possessed, the incitement to devote them to popular pursuits must have been powerful. The road to literary, to scientific, to political fame, was open before him;—and his acute discernment could not have left him ignorant, that many with endowments far inferior to his own, had been successful in the pursuit of them. Considering therefore the fascination which is associated with these, when prospectively presented to the view of man,—a more than superficial examination was necessary to enable him to resist their allurements. The pure light, however, which he had taken for his leader, could not fail to manifest the true nature and effects

of them;—that they originated in and must terminate *with* time,—and that, however “pleasant to the eyes,” “the fruit” would be deleterious in its consequences,—and produce a distressing harvest of “thorns and thistles,” which would cause him “to eat with sorrow all the days of his life.” But by avoiding the *means*, he was preserved from the *end* of these delusive glories; and there is abundant reason to believe that when “the silver cord was loosed,” which bound his spiritual to his material being,—the treasure which was most precious in his esteem was not separated from him;—but became the imperishable garment of his immortal spirit,—in which to associate with “the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.”

Perhaps, my dear friend, thou mayest be able to extract something from the above, which is, I believe, a true picture (as far as it goes) of my deceased friend,—that may answer the end thou hast in view. If so, thou art at liberty to use, to correct, or to suppress it,—as thou mayest think best. Please to present me affectionately to thy D., and our common friends—and believe me to be with unabated affection,

Thy sincere friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

During a period of about three years from the latter part of 1815, Edward Stabler remained mostly at home, to the great enjoyment of his family and himself. No one could well be more beloved in the domestic circle. His wife and elder offspring consulted his feelings, and leaned on his judgment with the ut-

most tenderness and confidence; and the younger children welcomed his return from abroad or the engagements of business with great joy, in which he was always ready to meet them when his spirits were not depressed by disease, or absorbed in religious exercise. Perhaps no parent was ever fonder of adapting his deportment and language to the capacity and inclinations of the juvenile mind.

To the members of his own meeting, his presence was desirable; and many acquaintances, members of the Society of Friends and others, called upon him to enjoy his instructive conversation. Some of these were actuated by curiosity; some by a desire to measure intellectual strength with him; others believed it their duty to controvert such of his opinions as they thought erroneous; and a few were urged by an intelligent and righteous desire to seek the truth. When his mind was called into action by the questions and remarks of his visitors, he poured out his sentiments with an eloquence that none were disposed to interrupt; and he was well qualified to interest them. He had read much; his observation had been extensive and correct; and a mature judgment enabled him to select from the stores of a retentive memory "things new and old," according to the state and circumstances of his hearers.

From the period when, after deep suffering, he was permitted so largely to enjoy the Divine presence, he felt no inclination to enter into controversy, either to refute an opponent, or to display his own intellectual powers. Having partaken of those "living waters"

which spring up in the redeemed soul unto everlasting life, he was now more solicitous that his hearers should come to the fountain *in themselves* and drink, than to amuse them with fruitless speculations, or un-felt truths. To draw the attention of others to the "beauty of holiness," to open to their view the danger and the suffering which attend on every departure from revealed truth,—were now the great objects of his social labours.

It has sometimes happened, when engaged in his business, that strangers who had called to purchase medicines, have made remarks which have opened the way for the illustration of some important truths; and conversations have ensued which have left impressions never to be obliterated.

A remarkable instance of this kind will be recollected by some who read this memoir. About the time of that extraordinary manifestation of Divine light to his own mind, before alluded to, and which he emphatically called "the day of his espousals," he received a note from an unknown person requesting a medical prescription. Under the circumstances, he at first determined to decline compliance with the request; but on further consideration he changed his mind, and sent what he believed the case might require. A few days afterwards, a respectable stranger of prepossessing appearance called to thank him for the benefit he had received, and to pay his bill. After this was done, a conversation on religious subjects ensued, in which the stranger expressed some of his educational views of christian doctrines, which

he considered radically important. Some facts in his own experience, which were hostile to the theory he had adopted, were suggested by his friend; upon which the truth was manifested with irresistible evidence. He returned to his lodgings gratified with the interview; but after the first clear light of conviction had passed away, his educational impressions revived, and arguments were suggested in their favour which he deemed irrefutable. As the subject was deeply interesting to him, he renewed his visit for the purpose of further discussion; but his new arguments were satisfactorily answered, and his mind so clearly enlightened, that he again departed fully convinced of the truth. A cordial friendship was thus formed between these two congenial minds, which endured through the lives of the parties. The stranger was afterwards united in membership with Friends,—became an interesting and valuable minister of the Society, and finally departed this life universally beloved and regretted by his brethren in religious profession.

The subject of this memoir was regular in the attendance of religious meetings, when at home: and as the periods of the Quarterly and Yearly meetings returned, he always attended them, unless prevented by paramount duty, or by circumstances beyond his control. His conduct in this respect was truly exemplary. Though his gift in the ministry was exercised to the instruction of crowded meetings, yet his conversation was listened to, perhaps with equal interest.—He once said, while reflecting on his own experience

in social intercourse, that he believed a mind rightly attentive to the openings of Truth, would be led at times without premeditation to deliver its views for the sake of the standers by, as Jesus did to the Samaritan woman, and on other occasions; and that he might at some time have to visit his friends abroad with this particular object in view. He was never called to this, however, as a primary service; but it always came in as an incidental duty of great delight to himself, and to the friends whom he visited.

In the first month 1816, he was appointed on a committee, the object of which was to propose a course of action for the monthly meeting to pursue, in regard to a recommendation of the Yearly Meeting. The committee subsequently made the following report, which exhibits the nature of the subject; viz:

“The committee have agreed to report, that upon mature deliberation they are of the judgment, that in relation to our important testimony against slavery, the time has arrived when the attention of our members should be affectionately called to some particulars which, as far as they may be found practicable, would we believe have a tendency to advance this testimony. It is known that the nature of the case towards which the spirit of our discipline is directed, prohibits Friends from hiring slaves of those who hold them; it is therefore believed by the committee, that an application of the same principle renders it desirable, that in those cases in which we are dependent upon others for the execution of our lawful business, we should give the

preference to those who will perform the work by free men, rather than at an inferior price to employ those who, we may have reason to believe, will use the labour of slaves; also that Friends should avoid employing those as servants in their families, who hire themselves from their owners.

We have not ascertained that there are any of the offspring of those who have been liberated by Friends, retained amongst us; nor that there are any cases of the excessive use of ardent spirits: but as our testimony strikes at the root of these two great evils, viz: slavery, and the improper use of spirituous liquors, as well as at all traffic in them, it is believed that there is a strong obligation upon every member to guard assiduously against every violation of the principle, in the latter as well as the former case.

With a view however to ascertain the states of the several cases, as well as promote an increased attention amongst Friends to the interesting subjects referred to our consideration, we are free to propose that a committee be appointed to whose care the subjects may be consigned," &c.

This report was concurred in by the meeting, and Edward Stabler and Elisha Talbott, &c., were appointed the committee, who paid such attention as the business required, and reported in the 7th month, that "they had not found any of the descendants of the African race, liberated by Friends, amongst our members; and that further, they believed Friends, with a few exceptions, were clear in respect to our testimony concerning ardent spirits." As the latter subject was,

however, deemed of great interest, they felt desirous that overseers and other members who felt its importance, might be faithful to their duty, and encourage their brethren to remove each remaining obstruction to perfect clearness in regard to it.

His mind was drawn in the spring of 1818, to attend the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Virginia, and also to attend and appoint some meetings in other parts of that State. The subject was impressively opened in the monthly meeting, and that body expressed its concurrence with his prospect. It was on this occasion that he passed through one of those deep baptisms of spirit, which are found to be indispensably necessary to qualify for the ministry of the New Testament. His own health at the time was feeble, and some of his family were indisposed. These circumstances, combining with the weight of religious exercise through which he was passing, and the trial of his feelings at the prospect of leaving home, reduced him to a very low condition. He compared his desolation now to that of Idumea as described by the prophet: "thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." In the midst of this distress, nothing could have induced him to commence the contemplated journey but an abiding conviction of duty, which was accompanied with the language of encouragement from every member of his family competent to give a judgment. This state of baptism terminated on his departure from home; and he afterwards remarked, that on the removal of this deep trial, which

he believed had been sent for the correction of unchastened dispositions, he uttered mentally as he travelled along, this joyful exclamation, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus."

The Yearly Meeting was held in the lower part of Virginia,—the scene of his early life; and he met here with many persons whom he had known in former years, as well as some of the descendants of his old friends. On the first day of the week, on these annual occasions, the number of persons who generally assembled at the meeting house, was greatly more than the building could contain. The seats and vacant places were usually filled up at an early hour, and favourable positions around the house, crowded with auditors. On this occasion, our valued relative took a part in the concerns of the Society, and bore his testimony to the truth, in the public assemblies, in a manner instructive and acceptable. But his usefulness was perhaps equally conspicuous at the private dwellings, where young and old were drawn around him in silent crowds to enjoy his instructing and highly interesting conversation. It is not affirmed that his views, nor even his catholic spirit were acceptable to all. The force of education and the power of habit cloud the minds of some in all communities, and cause them to regard suspiciously every doctrinal view that does not consist with their preconceived opinions. This infirmity may exist, however, in union with a christian disposition. Correspondency of opinion is not essential to that unity of the Spirit which constitutes the bond of peace.

In the latter part of 1818, a concern on account of the use of ardent spirits, again claimed the attention of the monthly meeting, and Edward Stabler was appointed one of a committee to examine the condition of Friends in regard to that subject. In the 7th month of the year following, the committee informed the meeting, that the members, with a few exceptions, were clear of importing, vending, distilling, and improperly using this article.

The occasion of the following letter was a mournful one. An aged and valued friend of the writer, who was known and esteemed throughout the Yearly Meeting to which he belonged, and who had struggled for many years to support a large family, and also devoted himself in the mean while to the promotion of the cause of righteousness,—at length failed in business. He felt, after this event, that he was viewed as a degraded man; and ere long the powers of an exhausted constitution sunk beneath the weight of distress.

— 1818.

If there be any thing like a charge of culpability which can attach to him, it is that of having engaged in *too much business*. And, alas! how universally has this charge been deserved by the inhabitants of our country for the last twenty-five years! and how many have been the victims who have fallen sacrifices to it! Upon this subject, it would appear that the members of the human family were less attentive to

facts, than on almost any other. Could they increase their capacities for enjoying or partaking of the things of time, in proportion to the extent of their acquirements, there would be some excuse for them. But it is evident that our capacities for such enjoyment are confined within very narrow limits;—and although an individual may possess a sufficiency to supply the necessities of a million, he cannot without suffering transcend, in the use of them, the powers of one man. We know the attempt is often made, to proportion the capacities to the means of sensual enjoyment, but we also know, it never succeeds;—and pride, drunkenness, and gluttony, with their innumerable train of maladies and miseries, are the legible record of the failure. Were men to reflect on this subject with attention, aided by the certainty which the light of heaven affords them, they could not fail of being impressed with the wisdom included in the question and counsel, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.”

E. S.

In the fall of 1821, his attendance of the Yearly Meeting of Baltimore, was prevented by the prevalence of the yellow fever in a part of the town of Alexandria. Uniting in himself the characters of druggist and physician, and possessing the confidence of the people, his services could not be spared at a time like this. He dwelt in the healthier part of the town, and his family escaped the disease; but his store was situated in the infected district, and the resort to him for advice and medicine was continual. A cloud of deep

gloom overhung the community, and the hearse was frequently seen in the streets. The writer of this narrative was with him during the whole of that period, and observed his attention to the sick. He administered to their sufferings and sympathized with their griefs; and he afterwards expressed his undoubted belief, from his own observation, that many who were little known, from the obscurity and apparent lowness of their situation, received the messenger of death with well founded calmness and joy.

About this time he settled transiently two sons and two daughters on a farm; and the residence would have been permanent for the two young men, had it suited them. They were all verging to adult age; and at this critical period of life, the heart of their father was often anxious for their safety. He manifested his concern for them whenever an opportunity offered; and, we doubt not he was made the agent in the Divine hand of guarding them from much suffering.

The two following letters were addressed to these children during their residence in the country; viz:

Alexandria, 17th of 4th mo., 1822.

MY DEAR SON,—

Agreeably to thy request, expressed by my dear A. in her letter of last week, I inclose the necessary sum to enable thee to purchase another horse. But before thou concludest to purchase, I would have thee to obtain the judgment of some person of greater experience than thyself; otherwise thou mayest be im-

posed upon, either in the price, the quality, or the age of the horse. — does not show much regard for the welfare of his fellow-creatures, when his own interest may be served by sacrificing theirs; as is demonstrated by his selling intoxicating drink to those who would destroy themselves with it if they could get enough;— therefore be on thy guard in relation to him, and all such people. I am much indebted to A. for her medical skill and perseverance in combating my dear T's sickness. I shall hope to hear next first-day, that he has had no relapse. The message received from thee that "thou felt well when at work," was particularly grateful to my mind; and I hope thou wilt be encouraged to be diligent in thy business. It will contribute to thy comfort in every way, and promote thy respectability among men, and likewise increase the confidence of thy friends. Every body is willing to help one who is disposed to help himself. Even the selfish foresee that such an one may have it in his power to help them in return. On the contrary, all are afraid to assist him who is not diligent in his own concerns, because help bestowed in such a case is like putting treasure in a bag without a bottom. By all means, my dear son, guard against undue excitement of all sorts; thy constitution has a powerful tendency to passionate ardor, in all thy pursuits:—it is therefore greatly thy interest, and as greatly thy duty, to guard against it. And neither thou nor any other person ever indulged it without doing wrong, and being miserable as long and as extensively as it's government was submitted to. The true dignity of man will always be found in

that calm, composed state of mind, which enables him to see clearly every thing that concerns him, and to judge dispassionately of every principle and mode of action which may be presented to his choice—and in this he resembles the sun and the other lights of heaven, which are fixed, and bright, and shine continually. The passionate man, on the contrary, is like the light of a lamp or candle; every breath of opposition makes him tremulous—and a gust of passion will quite extinguish all the brightness he possessed, and leave the mind to grope its way in utter darkness.

Farewell, my dear son.

I am, as ever, thy affectionate father,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 12th, 1823.

MY DEAR GIRLS,—

The mind of your father who most affectionately loves you, has of late (and more particularly since your last acceptable visit to Alexandria) been introduced into a deep concern and bitter exercise, on account of the appearance on your part of an inclination to indulge those dispositions which lead to a fondness for gayety of apparel, inconsistent with the self-denying principles and example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the precepts and examples of the truly righteous in all ages. I have travailed under it with much suffering, and believe I shall not be clear in the sight of heaven, without stating to you some of the views which have rested with great weight and authority on my spirit. It has been the will of Providence to in-

due you with understandings, and to favour you with privileges, superior to the generality of the human family:—and as all his ways are *equal, just, and right*, you may be assured that he expects in just proportion, more from you than from those to whom he has given fewer talents; for, “to whom much is given,” of them much is required. And this responsibility is double;—first, as it regards yourselves; in whom beyond all doubt, if you indulge in vanity, the fruits of vanity will be produced; even sorrow, confusion, and bitterness of soul; and your hearts will have no place of refuge to which you may flee for comfort or support in the times of *bereavement*; and, secondly, as it respects those who may be influenced and encouraged by your example, to go to still greater excesses than yourselves. It will be in vain to say, “Are we our brothers’ keepers?” for the blood of their sacrificed innocence, will cry to their and your heavenly Father from the ground, not only for those immediate acts by which it has been shed, but also for withholding that pure example which would have uttered the inviting language, “Follow us, as we follow Christ,”—and which, if they would not have obeyed, their blood would have been upon *their own heads*, and you would have been clear.

Now, my dear Girls, do not misunderstand me, as though I would insinuate that the malignant influence is in a piece of tortoise shell, or in materials,—or shape,—or color,—or cost of a garment—for I have no such view. But in respect to these things, as well as all others which have any relation to us, *the state*

of mind which chooses or rejects, which is pleased or offended, contains essentially the whole good or evil of the case, as respects yourselves—as it is that which furnishes the example by which the same principles in the minds of others are fed or famished. For if you will seriously and candidly examine the operations of your own minds, you cannot fail to discover at all times the nature of the principle in yourselves which is engaged in choosing or rejecting. And if your own wills do not oppose, it will be made plain—whether its nature is one with that wisdom which is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits; or whether it partakes of the wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. As these discoveries are attended to, you will not only behold with greater clearness than any language can describe, the superiority of all fruits and consequences of the former,—but, attracted by its beauty and enamoured of its loveliness, you will delight to sit under its shadow;—its purity will be sweet to your taste;—it will take you to its banqueting house;—and its banner over you will be love. Nor will it ever forsake you, unless you forsake it; but it will go with you through all the changes of time, and speak peace, and command a calm in those storms, in which the hearts of those who have not received the Divine Guest on board, will have to tremble for fear and find no help. It will go with you also into eternity, where it will wipe all tears from your eyes, and sorrow and sighing shall be known no more. Oh! my dear children,

compare these unspeakable advantages, with the best fruits which you can ever expect to gather from vanity and the pride of the carnal mind; and can your excellent understandings hesitate for a moment which to prefer?

Let not the cross deter you from obedience to that government, which will cause you to realize not only these benefits, but others in countless multitudes—[it has always been the language of the carnal mind, “Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him,”] and will moreover double its benefits, by preserving you from a train of calamities equally innumerable, into which you must necessarily fall, if you will not have the Son of God to rule over you. I know there are influences felt in your minds, and in mine, and in all others, which dread the cross of Christ, because we see that it will “crucify the world to us, and us to the world:”—but as many as are willing to submit to its operations, do come to the experience of the apostle who gloried in it above all other things. Look again, I entreat you, to what is in yourselves that represents it as so desirable to be “conformed to the world,”—and see if it has any of those characters which belong to the spirit which is of God? Whether it produces love, joy, peace, gentleness, long suffering, goodness, truth, meekness, temperance, patience? And see what it is in others, that will be attracted toward you by gayety of apparel and behaviour.

If you see a sign hung out, that gaming and drinking are carried on within the house, what kind of cus-

tomers will be invited to enter? Will they be the honest, the prudent, the temperate?—or rogues, and sharpers, and drunkards? In like manner, a conformity to the world in its fashions and manners, can only allure those to become your associates, who having themselves resisted or been unacquainted with the cross of Christ, are only pleased with those in whom similar principles predominate. Your own precious mother, when I first became acquainted with her, though she could not be said to be very plain, yet she did not dress as fancifully as you now do;—and before we were married, she changed her dress (from conviction) to entire plainness. Nor was she less lovely for the alteration in the view of any whose esteem was worth cultivating;—but she was on the contrary more estimable to the good, and incomparably more respectable in the view of *even* the *vicious*, than if she had conformed to the same principles which governed them.

I most ardently wish, my dear children, to save you from suffering; and I know from bitter and agonizing experience, that a conformity to the customs and fashions of the world, is like gathering and heaping up fuel that must at some future time be consumed by fire;—and the more there is of it, the more intense will be the burning,—and the more extreme the suffering. This crisis cannot be avoided by you, nor can all the world deliver you from its inevitable occurrence, nor help you to endure its miseries: and if it does not in great mercy occur before, it will take place on the dying bed,—which has sufferings enough of its own,

independent of the stings of a wounded and disordered spirit. May I hope that these solemn and interesting considerations will claim your serious consideration? You know that I can be actuated by no motive inferior to love, in making these representations. You must also be conscious that my duty is involved, as your only surviving parent, in doing all that I can for your happiness:—and it is from a full conviction of the truth of these things, that I am induced with inexpressible affection to commend them to your observance. I am, with love which words cannot convey,

Your father,

EDWARD STABLER.

In the summer of 1825, our beloved relative suffered with a large and painful gathering in his right arm and hand; which, though produced by a slight cause, apparently, seriously threatened his life. He was confined to his bed for several weeks, undergoing constant and violent pain, until the inflammation resolved itself into a copious secretion of matter. His recovery from the extreme debility consequent on this disease, was very slow. Many months elapsed before his usual strength returned, and probably his constitution never fully regained its health. His right hand was permanently crippled. Throughout this sickness, as in time of health, his mind was continually engaged with religious considerations, and ardent desires were breathed to his Heavenly Father that he might be enabled to submit willingly to the utmost of that dispensation.

When he had so far recovered as to sit up in his chair, the first information reached him of the noble conduct of a young Virginian, who, actuated by a sense of justice, had freed his slaves, and at his own expense, but with their consent, had them transported to the American colony in Africa; furnishing each one with a comfortable outfit for his new country. As the account of the circumstance was read, the sympathy, the delight, and the gratitude of the invalid became so intense, that his enfeebled system could not support the excitement without relief from a flood of tears. We may see exemplified in this circumstance, the beautiful effect of actions performed under the influence of righteous principles. The expressions of the apostle seemed to be measurably fulfilled in the present case, "Their sound goeth out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."—Rom. x. 18. The liberty attained by that soul which is converted from evil by the influence of Divine love, is the only liberty which truly deserves the name. The difference between this state, which has been the happy possession of many whose bodies were in bonds,—and mere personal freedom, is so great, that the one may be designated as being of heaven, the other of the earth. These reflections are not intended to lower the right estimation of personal liberty, but to point to that of which it can only be a faint resemblance.

In the springs of 1823 and 1825, he again visited the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Virginia, and obtained the liberty of appointing meetings for worship on his

journey. From conversations with his family, and the testimonials of those he visited, we learn that the effect of his labours among the people was salutary. His reception must have been cordial, for he was always much animated when speaking of these journeys.

At the present period (1844) there is evidence that in the section of the country spoken of, the ministry of the departed is still remembered with gratitude. There is something so deeply interesting in the impressions received from a true gospel ministry, delivered "in the demonstration of the spirit and with power," that the mind cannot easily forget them.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland, including parts adjacent, and the neighbouring section of Delaware, were visited in the following year. In this engagement he spent about three months, to his great relief and comfort. The following extracts are made from a letter to his wife, dated

"Chester Town, 6th mo. 12th, 1826.

MY DEAR MARY,—

The joint letter from thyself and our dear children, though twelve days old, was nevertheless most cordially acceptable, and all its details highly interesting; but I cannot notice them all in reply, as I have not "the pen of a ready writer." I am still favoured with the blessing of good health, and have attended five meetings since I wrote to you from Camden; all of which have been seasons of favour. Indeed I have not known, that I remember, at any former period, such a continued sufficiency of Divine help afforded, to open and apply the truths of the gospel to the states of the

people; nor a more decided evidence of its being received by them in the love of it. At the same time, my mind has been kept humble, and I have rejoiced in feeling and knowing that "the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man." I expect to have an appointed meeting in this town to-morrow evening, and W. M. thinks that we may get through all the meetings so as to reach Wilmington on next first-day; at which place, so far as I now see, my prospect of religious service will terminate, and I shall be at liberty to turn my face homewards, and hope once more to meet you, my dearest earthly treasures. My mind has been kept remarkably free from all anxiety about home; but at the time when I expected some of my dear children were on their way from Richmond, I could not help thinking often about them, and indulging most ardent desires that they might be preserved in safety. This favour has also been granted to me.

* * * * Why don't you write more about my precious *little ones*? I feel sometimes as if I could love them almost too much, and pain them by the ardour of my embraces, if I had them with me. As I told you in my last, I must put off giving a detailed account of my journey until I get home. It has been thus far, most interesting and instructive to me; and I hope it has furnished large and renewed ground of confidence in the goodness and all-sufficiency of that blessed Power which is unchangeable; and still, as ever, "when he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them." May we all learn to trust and love him, for he is indeed worthy of all adoration and praise forever.

This letter, though addressed to thee, is like every thing else that we have, the property in common with our dear children, towards whom my tenderest feelings of affection flow continually. * * *

I remain, as ever, thy own

EDWARD STABLER."

The difficulty in the use of the pen, alluded to above, had always existed to some extent, but the late gathering in his hand had greatly increased it. Notwithstanding this impediment, however, he was now more engaged than formerly in writing, because of a partial release from the cares of business which fell on his eldest son, and of the enlargement of his religious experience, that led him often to commune in this way with his absent friends. The "detailed account" of his travels being delivered while the circumstances were fresh in his memory, and his heart was glowing with gratitude, was always exceedingly full of interest and instruction.

The excellent friend to whom the following letter was addressed, had suggested to him the propriety of writing, for publication, a series of essays on the evils of slavery, grounding his arguments on the result of observations made during his late journey through the peninsula of Delaware and Maryland.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 1826.

DEAR FRIEND,—

Thy acceptable favour of 2nd inst. was duly received, and no want of sincere regard for thee, or good will to the cause thou art desirous to promote,

has prevented me from replying to it earlier. In my late religious journey over the peninsula of the Eastern Shore, I did indeed observe—as I have before done whenever I have travelled, or been present in a country where slavery was practiced—that it not only tended to produce outward poverty by preventing improvements, and deterioration of the lands, but that it produced a still more disastrous penury in the minds of slave-holders, by divesting them of those mental qualities upon which we are all dependent for comfort, and the want of which cannot be compensated by even the revenues of the world. But, my dear friend, I have also *observed*, they have *felt and experienced* this state of things in all its bitter reality, and yet they are unwilling to abandon the causes of this double poverty, this incalculable affliction. If then these powerful incentives, these perpetual monitors which are speaking to them, not in the feeble voice of words, but in the irresistible language of suffering and privation, cannot persuade them,—what can be expected from the impotent efforts of the most powerful eloquence of man, when addressed only to their eyes or ears.

I have long been of the persuasion, that much of the good that might have been done, has been obstructed by the attempts which have been made to abolish slavery, having originated and been prosecuted upon political, instead of religious motives and convictions. This has confined the views of the advocates for emancipation to one side only of the subject. They have seen, in so prominent an aspect, the wrongs and

sufferings of the *slave*, that the still greater calamities of the master have been scarcely noticed. The course of their remarks, therefore, as well as their operations, have been directed against the *latter* as the immediate cause of the sufferings they would obviate. And nothing else could have been reasonably expected than what has really taken place, as a consequence of this mode of proceeding; the slave-holder has considered himself injuriously assailed,—his mind has become exasperated, and he has placed himself upon the defensive, or become an assailant in his turn; and the result has been, that, like all other political contentions, the conflict has been degraded into a combat of persons, instead of a contest between the *principles* of right and wrong.

The latter constitute, and always have constituted the scene and instruments of true religious effort; and hence the astonishing success which attended the original movements of John Woolman and his fellow-labourers, in relation to slavery in our Society. Their attention became, in the first instance, forcibly directed to the *powers of justice, opposing the principles of injustice in themselves; of mercy, arrayed against cruelty; love, against hatred; and goodness against evil.* In this way, the mysteries of *godliness* and *iniquity*, became radically opened to their understandings; and having been made conquerors through Him that loved them, and dispensed to them these good and perfect gifts, which are in their nature antagonist to all manner of evil,—they went forth to others to persuade and admonish them, armed with no other weapons but these,

which they had tried, and which had given them the victory, and by which alone the victory ever can be achieved. They perceived that cruelty, injustice, and oppression, were no less tyrants to the master, than when they came to operate upon the slave;—and that if the slave was to be pitied for what he suffered from them, the master, being the subject of the same malevolent influences, was no less to be pitied than the slave. This made the slave-holder and the slave the equal objects of tender solicitude. These good men could form a just estimate of the situation of both, by what they themselves had suffered and observed from the influence of corrupt principles; and meeting and communing with the slave-holders upon the real grounds, or causes of their sufferings, their language was like the language at Pentecost, understood by every nation under heaven, because it related to what they knew and felt.

It has often fallen to my lot to converse with slave-holders; I am therefore authorized to state the above views as facts; and these facts go to confirm the persuasion, that there are now so many combatants with political weapons engaged in this warfare, that it has assumed a new character; and it is now a difficult if not an impracticable affair to enter the field with any prospect of advantage or success, upon those legitimate terms which only are admissible by a christian spirit.

With much cordiality of esteem, I subscribe myself,

Thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

We may add, that since he had felt it his duty to withdraw from a benevolent society (see page 37,) he had avoided all such connections, and his counsel was the means of preventing one of his family from pursuing that course. He believed that his efforts would be more purely directed by the right influence, standing alone, than when subjected to the control of persons who had not passed through the same discipline with himself.

In the spring of 1827, he was again drawn by the power of gospel love to attend the Yearly Meeting of New York, and to appoint some meetings in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. During and after the present period, some allusions will be found in his correspondence to the disturbed condition of the Society of Friends. Having weighed maturely the circumstances of the division which had lately taken place, and examined the ground of the two parties, he came to a clear and decided judgment, that the deep, spiritual, and practical views of Elias Hicks, so little understood and so greatly misrepresented, were in accurate accordance with the Christian religion. He held fast, accordingly, to the Truth, and found his usefulness and comfort both enlarged. Of his intimate friends who joined the other party, some viewed him with regret, as a wanderer from the true fold, while others treated him with coldness and disrespect. The great body of his own Yearly Meeting and the monthly meeting of Alexandria, then were and continued to be in full unity with him.

The following letters give some account of this journey.

Jericho, 6th mo. 7th, 1827.

Thine and my dear Elizabeth's letter of last seventh and first-days, came to hand last evening. The information of your general health was indeed very grateful, and for which with many other mercies my heart was, I think, made truly thankful. I feel sorry that my incapacity as a scribe, prevents me from giving you in detail an account of my proceedings; but you must endeavour to be content with generalities until my return, if that should be the Divine will, when I hope to amuse, if not instruct you with a relation of many interesting circumstances. I am now writing at the house of the dear old patriarch, Elias Hicks; having attended this day a very favoured and interesting meeting in the place of worship to which he belongs. This is the fourth that I have attended on Long Island,—all of them seasons which I shall not readily forget. It will give thee and my dear children much pleasure to be informed, that we are every where received with open hearts, by as kind and affectionate Friends as I ever saw or ever heard of. It may be said truly, that our hearts fare sumptuously every day: and this state of things occurring immediately after the most tumultuous and uncomfortable Yearly Meeting that I ever sat in,—gives a double relish to every thing we feel, or partake of. I never saw the equal of the endeavours made by some in that meeting, to sow discord and confusion: but they were ultimately defeated in their purposes. * * * At the public

meeting on fourth-day, at Rose street in New York, I had a much more full opportunity of relieving my mind from exercise, than I had had before, to a very large and deeply attentive audience, * * * With a heart overflowing with love to thee and all my precious children, I must conclude, and am thy truly affectionate

EDWARD STABLER.

To his Wife.

New York, 6th mo. 12th, 1827.

I am here again, after having visited all the meetings on Long Island. And I can say, with gratitude to the gracious Author of all our mercies, that never have I known a greater fullness of Divine sufficiency, in affording clear and persuasive openings of the blessed certainties of gospel Truth,—than during this visit. The people were, for the time, affected by its loveliness, and the certainty of its power to bless and to save them; and I cannot but hope that these impressions will be sealed upon many minds, so as not to be removed. The last opportunity, at Matinicoek on first-day, was the crown to the whole. A great multitude of people were collected, and dear old Elias and a number of other ministers and elders attended from the neighbouring meetings; but the whole public service was laid on me, and a more solemn or interesting meeting I think I never was in.

In the afternoon, when we were about to part with Elias and a number of others, we had a most precious uniting season; in which the melting and cementing

power of Divine love gathered us all under its heavenly influence, young and old, as the heart of one man—being actuated and blessed by the same life.

With much thankfulness, I can say that my health is remarkably good; and my prayers are that all my precious ones may be favoured with the same, if consistent with the Divine will. Make my dear little ones sensible of the love their absent father feels for them—the elder ones know it without being told.

EDWARD STABLER.

To his Wife.

Troy, 6th mo. 19th, 1827.

MY DEAR MARY,—

A very interesting passage on board of a steam-boat, through the most picturesque country that I ever saw, brought us from New York to Albany. We had upwards of one hundred passengers. We are now with the hospitable family of our friend I. M., in this beautiful town, “whose merchants are princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth.” But I must go back to say that I attended the two meetings in New York last fourth and fifth-days; both of them interesting and solemn opportunities;—where the Holy hand of Divine help was eminently extended, and the triumph of the blessed Truth appeared to be complete. Thus far, I have not encountered any personal opposition. We attended two meetings here yesterday, and I expect to have a public meeting to-morrow.

I was very much interested with my dear Rebecca’s narrative of little Henry’s disappointment. I hope it

will be of great use to the precious boy, by showing him how dear a price he pays for disobedience to proper regulations, which may induce him to avoid it in future as a bad bargain.

I am gratified to find the public mind, in a remarkable manner, open to receive those views which are given to me of the nature, realities, and effects of the gospel of Christ. In these illustrations, my heart has gratefully to acknowledge the unspeakable goodness of my Divine Master, in bringing before the view of my mind, with the clearness of demonstration, "things both new and old;" so that opposition is paralyzed in *some minds*, and a blessed encouragement is afforded to *others* to persevere in the way of well-doing;—clearly perceiving that "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

My health continues to be remarkably preserved.
* * * My kind brother P. and sister S. with our Margaret J., have left a good report behind them, which I meet with wherever I cross, or fall into the path they have travelled. I feel that I ought to be grateful to them, for the help that their good conduct thus affords to their poor, wandering brother: but the greatest of all earthly supports and encouragements that my mind has access to, is the precious, the delightful hope of returning, when my service is over, to the bosom of my own family, whose members are all inexpressibly dear to the heart of their

EDWARD STABLER.

Trenton, 7th mo. 6th, 1827.

My dear William's and Elizabeth's letter of the 2nd inst. was placed in my hands on the evening of the 4th. Truly, I have cause for gratitude to the Fountain of mercies, for the preservation of my family in the comfort and health they have been favoured with, while I am wandering about so far from them. I spent last third-day with —. They received and entertained me kindly; but there were very evidently *clouds* in the horizon of their minds, to which we did not make any allusion.

Thus far, the Lord our merciful Helper has wonderfully supported me, and given me ability to advocate his blessed cause, and the earth has been silent before him. He seems to be opening a way for the spreading of his blessed Truth, even by those convulsions which seem to short-sighted man to militate against it; and the testimonies which I am enabled to bear to it, seem to be received with cordiality, and without opposition.

My time is limited, so that I cannot write you a long letter now; but I can assure you that my heart is as full of love, ardent love for you as ever; and I hope to be able in one week more, to give you some account of the period when you may look for me at home. Love to all my friends and relations, concludes me for the present, your affectionate

EDWARD STABLER.

The extreme illness of one of his younger children, occasioned him so much anxiety during the latter part

of this journey, that he felt himself at liberty to return for awhile, and watch over his sick bed. The little boy recovered; and his father in due time resumed his interesting labours.

The following letter to his family, was written during his second journey.

Darby, 11th mo. 14th, 1827.

"I have been very busily engaged since I left Wilmington. From that place I went to Philadelphia; and thence the next day, to Abington Quarterly meeting. It was the first they had held without interruption, and it was a memorable time;—a time of unity, love, and condescension, such as we have read of, but such as I have never seen until now. It has been the same in all the meetings I have attended; and so it was pre-eminently in Concord Quarterly meeting, held yesterday at this place. My friends have received me with overwhelming kindness. * * I met with our dear friends Valentine Hicks and family in Philadelphia, and they gave me a pleasing account of their visit, with the information that they had left thee and my precious children in good health. Thine and my dear William's letter came to hand while I was at Abington; and surely, I never loved all of you more than I do now. I shall be very anxious to hear from you; and you will please to write immediately, and direct to the care of Joseph Bringhurst at Wilmington, who will find some way to send the letter to me.

With warm love to all my precious ones, I am as ever most affectionately your

EDWARD STABLER."

The interest which was felt in our beloved relative by his friends in Alexandria, was so much increased by his expanding views, self-denial, and dedication of spirit,—that each successive return to his home appeared to be greeted with warmer feelings.

The following extract describes his own sensibility on one of these occasions: "I was favoured to arrive safe at home, and find my precious family in good health. Every beloved eye sparkled to see me, and every dear bosom throbbed with satisfaction. To myself, it was a confluent ecstasy of feeling which language cannot describe."

His attachment to his friends abroad, was also strengthened by his late intercourse with them, and he gave utterance to his sentiments in the following series of letters.

Alexandria, 12th mo. 1827.

I should not do justice to the feelings which your kindness and affectionate attentions excited in my heart, during my late visit, if I did not, in the only way that is now in my power, assure you that the remembrance of my dear friends is still very affectionately cherished. I arrived safely at home, the seventh day week after I parted with you at West Grove.—My dear family were all in good health, and my friends disposed to greet my return with their accustomed cordiality and kindness.

I feel the importance of these blessings;—and am aware that they not only call for thankfulness to the gracious Dispenser of them,—but that watchfulness is also necessary, to prevent the *gifts* from occupying too

large a space in my affections, where the GIVER is only worthy, and ought to be supreme. For, grateful and precious as all outward blessings are, they are still in their nature transient and perishable; nor can they, even when possessed, satisfy our appetites for enjoyment.

The soul is spiritual, and must have food correspondent with its nature, or it will famish. This food is the "bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world: not as the fathers did eat manna in the wilderness *and are dead;*"—and as others have fed on the fruits of the earth, *and are dead also:*—but we want that food upon which we can "live forever;"—and it is graciously offered to our acceptance, in the "good and perfect gifts which come from above," and which are as really nourishing and sustaining to our souls, as outward food is to our bodies.

But, alas! my dear friends, you know as well or better than myself, how it is with too large a proportion of the professors of religion. Misled by the views which they have derived from education, their attention is turned to outward and absent things; and they seem to think that they are to know nothing here of the *saving realities* of religion, but by notions, and opinions, and doctrines, &c.—when at the same time they are all compelled to know, that those things which defile them and destroy their peace, all proceed from within, and are present with them;—and that all doctrines and opinions are without power to dislodge or control the least of these. The nature of the case therefore evidently requires, that "where the carcass

is, there should the eagles be gathered together;”—and that we stand in indispensable need of present powers, as real in their nature as the enemies which annoy and distress us,—to deliver us from them. And as our defilements are produced “by evil thoughts” and living corruptions, our heavenly Father has in his everlasting kindness opened within us a “fountain of living water,”—by the birth of his own Divine life within us; the streams of which shall make glad the city of God. They consist of the living principles of love, joy, peace, goodness, &c. which are in their nature antagonist to all the principles of evil; and will wash the mind from the defilements of these, as certainly as elementary water will cleanse the flesh from its defilements; and this is the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which cleanses us from all iniquity;—and that can “present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.”

I can but touch upon these things in the compass of a letter;—the subject is copious enough to fill the world with volumes, and still be unexhausted. But as I feel deeply for my endeared fellow-creatures in relation to this all important subject,—my thoughts seem to turn naturally to it when I am addressing any of them; and to you I am persuaded it will not be an unacceptable subject.

I wish you to present my affectionate remembrance to your children, as you may fall in company with them;—and to your dear E. say on behalf of her absent friend, “Hold fast that which thou hast, let no human power take thy crown from thee. Thou hast

seen the beauty of holiness and innocence, and if thou wilt give the government of thy mind to them, they will "deck thee with ornaments, and jewels, and broi-dered work,—and put a beautiful crown upon thy head; and thou wilt become exceedingly beautiful through the comeliness which thy God will put upon thee." I feel for that dear child as if she were my own, and shall rejoice in her prosperity. With much love, I remain your friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 12th mo. 24th, 1827.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

As I trust thy mind continues under the govern-ment of those pure and precious powers, which are the gifts of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the life of the *Divine* nature generated in the *human* by the descent of the "power of the Highest, and the over-shadowing of the Holy Spirit,"—I shall not fear for thy safety, nor doubt that all things will work together for thy good,—and for the promotion of the gospel of peace, as far as thou mayst be made an instrument for the purpose.

I have lately returned from finishing a religious visit to Friends in Pennsylvania, which was begun last summer, and from which I was permitted to return before it was accomplished, on account of the extreme illness of one of my children. But I have been abundantly satisfied that the measure was best. My son recovered;—and the powerful commotion which then agitated the Society, had gone on and produced its necessary

effect, a *division*. Among the Friends that I visited, there was a degree of vitality and susceptibility that I had not expected ever to witness. The people thronged to meetings in great numbers; and the large assemblies were uniformly covered with a solemnity, which as "a bright cloud" afforded a sweet evidence that God was with us, to instruct us and to heal us. And however various our spiritual maladies may be, I am entirely satisfied that in him there is "virtue" to heal them all.

I therefore cannot but rejoice at the present state of things, (though it is the cause of much mourning to many,) because I see in it the influence of a *Power* that is stirring up the stagnant pool of religious *profession*, which, like that at Bethesda, has yielded no healing influence to those who have been immersed in it. But those commotions are working wonderfully in the minds of all who are disposed to learn the Truth for themselves, by making in their own hearts a separation between the precious and the vile,—between the living and the dead. They are showing them the difference between the systems of men, which are formed of doctrines, creeds, and opinions,—and which the *worst* of human beings can get by rote and repeat, as well as the *best*,—and that immeasurable host of *living powers* which are in their nature destructive of all evil; and under the influence of which, man cannot be the servant of sin.

Thus it is that *mercy*, if submitted to, will deliver its votary from *cruelty*;—*love*, from *hatred*;—*gentleness*,

from *fierceness*;—*goodness*, from *evil*; &c. Now these are the gifts of God, not the donations of men. They come down from heaven, and are not of earthly origin. They constitute the body, the branches, the fruit, and the leaves of “the tree of Life that groweth in the Paradise of God;”—and those who feed upon it shall live forever. I know of nothing so interesting and important as these living powers, which issue to us from the fountain of Divine Life *in us*. They are the greatest source of enjoyment *in time*; and by their fruits *now*, they demonstrate what their effects *will be forever*; agreeably to the expression of the apostle, “Godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that *now is*, and of that which *is to come*.”

I expect thou art apprized by a better Teacher than I am, of the necessity of being watchful and vigilant;—lest by any means the stand which thou hast taken, and which will place many eyes in a watching state toward thee,—should furnish any of them with cause to doubt the efficacy of the precious donations of Christ to save from evil, and thereby prevent thee from falling;—as well as to redeem thee from every wrong thing by which, through inadvertency or inexperience, thou mayst have been led captive. I feel a true affection for thee, and cannot form a wish more pregnant with blessings, than that thou mayst be made a possessor of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

To *Elias Hicks*.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 19th, 1828.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,—

I have often remembered thy kind request when I was about to part from thee, that I would write to thee;—and truly I have often felt a sufficient degree of love to have induced the effort; but as I had nothing particularly upon my mind to say, I was unwilling to force myself to make an offering. Yet the important movements and changes which are now in progression in the Society of Friends, furnish a copious theme, so abounding with incidents of an interesting character that volumes might be filled with them.

Alas! how do *systems* of religion lead the children of men to overlook the omnipresent and illimitable “power and wisdom of God,” who being unchangeable in his nature, “is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;”—always working in the *same way* in relation to the *same states*; and being as fully disposed to redeem and to bless his creatures in the present day, as he was at any former period. Were facts duly considered by every mind that is seriously engaged in the examination of the all-important subject of religion, they would demonstrate the certainty of the foundation of all true christian doctrine, viz: that a birth of the Divine Life is generated in man “by the Holy Spirit coming upon him,—by the power of the Highest overshadowing him.” This birth in him is Christ, Immanuel, God with him; and becomes in every soul the “Fountain of living water,” from which all the

streams of righteousness and wisdom exclusively issue. In proportion as he partakes of these, he is preserved from evil; and as he forsakes them, he falls into iniquity:—and when fallen, these streams become the waters of that spiritual baptism which can alone cleanse him from his pollutions, and renew him again into the pure and innocent state in which he was created. In this state, and in this state only, can he have “peace, quietness, and assurance forever.” The righteous in every generation have been indebted to this holy life, operating in them for their salvation:—and they that have been redeemed in all ages, have been redeemed by it; nor has any human being ever known any other saving or redeeming power, *but this*.

But although *it is true*, that this heavenly life was manifested “in times past, and in divers manners” to every variety of state and condition,—and a true record has been preserved of what was done *for* and *in* others,—unhappily, many of our fellow-creatures, like the Jews formerly, in their zeal for the truth of what was done in former times and for other people,—seem to forget his infinitude and omnipresence:—and when he comes *in their flesh* to redeem *them*, and “to bless them by turning every one of them from their iniquities,” they reject and crucify him for the sake of their outward law, and carnal usages.

With much truth of affection,

I am thy sincere friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 2nd mo. 1st, 1828.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—

How can I promote thy happiness so effectually in regard to thyself, as by an endeavour to turn thy (already awakened) attention to the inspection of those precious realities, which being of universal importance to the children of men, in all their various states and conditions,—are, by the kindness of our heavenly Father, rendered accessible to the young and the old, the good and the evil? I have, however, witnessed in my own experience while young, the perplexing effects of that indefinite mode of inculcating the truths of the gospel, which has almost universally prevailed among the professors of the christian name. But I am not about to charge it upon them as a fault,—but rather to state it (which is the truth of the matter) as the necessary consequence of following the paths of prescription and tradition, instead of consulting the original principles by which alone the truth and power of salvation and redemption can be known or experienced. I have often felt, in my younger years, that poverty and nakedness of spirit which stood in need of food and clothing; but found them unrelieved by hearing or reading the vague admonition, “be ye fed; and be ye clothed;” when the things themselves which would have supplied my necessities, were not pointed out.

We are told by an inspired writer, that the clothing of the New Jerusalem was—“fine linen, clean and white.” He does not, however, leave the figure without a definition; but goes on to say, “which is the righteousness of saints.” The powers then which consti-

tute righteousness, form the true garments of all who become inhabitants of that "holy city." And in relation to these, there is no necessity to trust our safety upon an implicit faith in mysteries or unknown things,—for it is self-evident:—and unless the souls of the children of men become so ignorant as not to perceive the difference between love and hatred,—kindness and anger,—mercy and cruelty, &c.—or should be unconscious of the difference in their influences to produce happiness and misery,—surely they cannot fail of certainty in the knowledge that the fine linen, clean and white, "which is the righteousness of saints," is as really composed of a combination of the powers of goodness, thus universally distributed for acceptance, as linen is formed by the interwoven threads which constitute its fabric. And truly, they who are clothed with it are adorned with beauty;—they are protected from the storms and tempests of unholy passions and excitements; and surely they are saved!

The same may be said with equal truth, of the spiritual food by which only the soul can be sustained, and "grow in stature day by day, and in favour with God and man:" for, as Joseph said of the dreams of Pharaoh, "they are one." For the same principles of righteousness which clothe the soul with purity, and defend it from suffering, also constitute "the bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world."

Thus, my dear young friend, it is in the power of all of us to know, by a reference to living experience, the truth of that gospel which has for its objects, "Glo-

ry to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will to men." For, trace the principles of goodness to any extent that we may,—they will always be found invariably conducing to these ends:—and the blessed Fountain from which they issue to us, is the "Christ,—the Immanuel,—God with us." The existence of this Saviour in former times, as testified of in the scriptures, together with what he has always done for his people,—can never be understood by, or adequately known to us, but by a reference to the same Divine power in us,—doing the same things for *us* that he did for *them*,—as "God's salvation to the ends of the earth."

This is as much a fact, as that we cannot know any thing of the effects of light or heat (or any other natural agent) upon the former generations of the human race, but by the presence of the same agents operating in the same way upon *us* that they did upon *them*. The greatest evil perhaps that ever appeared among men, has been the substitution of imagination for experience, and conjectures for facts, in relation to the momentous subject of *Religion*; and this is *superstition*. I have felt its enthralling power, and known its bewildering influence: and I would willingly guard others from wandering in the same unprofitable mazes of error and disappointment, which made my existence a burden,—and strewed my path with sorrows. For our souls are possessed of an irrepressible hunger for *good*, which no earthly enjoyment can satisfy,—no religious theory appease. These then, ought to be abandoned, from their demonstrated inability to per-

form what we stand in need of and vainly expect from them;—more especially, as our experience and observation afford plentiful evidence, that love is the agent by which all human beings are made affectionate,—that humility makes them humble,—and kindness makes them kind, &c. These therefore are *realities* of undeniable efficacy;—they are knowable with positive certainty;—and their dominion is always a double blessing; first, from their own heavenly influence;—and secondly, by annihilating their opposing principles, and thereby preventing all their disastrous consequences.

I remain thy very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 2nd mo. 18th, 1838.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

I have very often contemplated with much earnestness of feeling, the spectacle of professors of religion seeking to be “*made perfect by the flesh*,” which Jesus himself declared “profiteth nothing:” for, it is worthy of notice, that it was of *his own* flesh that he was then speaking, as you will find by consulting the 6th chapter of John. But the views of those to whom he was addressing himself, being altogether outward, they had misunderstood his preceding expressions, and said, “how can this man give us his flesh to eat?” and to correct this mistake, the above declaration was made by him.

I am abundantly sensible, from my own experience, that while our views are outward, we can form no

other than outward estimates of the all-important subject of religion: and hence it is that the world has in all ages been full of outward religion, variously modified by education and social influence; but incapable of producing any higher or better effects than to govern, with more or less efficacy, the affairs of the outward creature of this world. Its "meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances," are only applicable to this creature, and have no power to "make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertains to the conscience." How vain and unprofitable, then, is a dependance upon even the most perfect and powerful of outward things, to effect the important change "from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly!" For instance; suppose that you or I had an open vision, equal in magnificence and splendour to that which Peter, James, and John beheld on mount Tabor, when the fashion of their Master's countenance was changed, "his face shining as the sun, and his garments white as the light,"—could it be of any more or greater advantage to us, than it was to them? But, we find from the records of scripture, that this glorious display did not instruct them at all in the nature of his kingdom, nor imbue them with its powers; nor were they qualified even to be his "witnesses," until they were made partakers of his spirit,—the same by which all his works were performed, and in which he promised to be with them "always, even to the end of the world." If then the actual, visible display of the holiness, the wisdom, the power, and the glory which existed in him, were powerless to make them partakers

of the kingdom of Christ, or to inform them of the true nature of it, or of Him,—how more than feeble must be *our imperfect conjectures* concerning the same things, formed from the mere history of them, which has been transmitted to us through the uncertain mediums of fallible copyists and translators; or the still more fallible interpretations of men who have evinced their unfitness for the service, by a conduct and conversation the reverse of his whom they profess to serve?

But, blessed be his holy name, we are not left in this mournful predicament; nor are the unspeakable benefits of present and eternal felicity made dependent upon circumstances so limited and corruptible; for the *life* that is in him is the *light* of men, and “is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” It is Divine, immortal, and unchangeable;—an everlasting fountain of living waters;—from which, in the utmost reality, all the streams of righteousness, goodness, and truth, perpetually flow to the human soul. *These*, and not the history of their operations, constitute “the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God.” This must have been true before the scriptures were written, or the scriptures which testify to it could not be a true record. And it is by these powers alone, that we can ascertain the truth of the scriptures; for the things written of, are the true interpreters of the words written; and every thing short of these, can only inspire mere conjectures about unknown things.

The counsel, therefore, which all the affectionate feelings of my spirit tender to you, is, Let not your hearts be troubled with the rumours and conjectures of your own, or other minds, concerning outward, absent, or distant things. It is too obvious to be disputed, that "a man's enemies are they of his own household." And what stronger evidence can be necessary to prove, that if he is to be delivered from them, his Saviour must be within him? agreeably to the declaration, "Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

In relation to the prepared body, in which our Divine Master was manifested eighteen hundred years ago, unless the advocates for *its* being in heaven at the right hand of God, can prove that it was not *flesh* and *blood*, their views will oppose the declaration of the apostle, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." But could we know all about it, where it is now, or what became of it when it disappeared,—I do not see any advantage that could accrue to us from such knowledge; seeing "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

I shall long remember, with much affection, your attention and kindness when I was with you, and should be glad to return it in kind to you, or any of your friends who may place it in the power of your friend,

EDWARD STABLEK.

To a long tried, and intimate Friend.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 1st, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

The trials of Friends in Ohio, mentioned in the letter of which thou wast so kind as to send a copy to T. W. and myself, excited much feeling for them; and awakened deep solicitude that they may avail themselves of the liberal bounty of a gracious Providence, who unsparingly dispenses for the acceptance of his rational creatures, his "good and perfect gifts" of "righteousness, goodness, and Truth," as the armour with which they may at once defend themselves against all the assaults of evil, and successfully combat its various powers, whether operating in themselves or through others: and I do not see the possibility of a victory that can be of any advantage to them, but what is achieved with these weapons. If they avail themselves of these, they will not be permitted to sacrifice their religious liberty at the command of any worldly power, however great; nor be seduced from their allegiance to the King of kings, by the example of "all kindreds, nations, tongues and people;" nor be driven from the path of duty, by threats of sufferings to be inflicted by their fellow-mortals: but in maintaining their righteous cause, they will show forth by "a godly conversation, coupled with fear," the innocence and purity of a gospel spirit, which will shorten their season of trial, and speak to all who behold them with more persuasive eloquence, than the tongues of men or of angels.

I have also often felt for my brethren, who have assumed the unhappy position of "lords over God's

heritage." For, under no possible circumstances that I can conceive of, can such a state be other than a gnawing worm and a tormenting fire to them; nor can they maintain that position by the "armour of righteousness;" but must form an alliance with, and avail themselves of the assistance of anger, and hatred, and evil speaking, &c. We have all of us probably known enough of the nature and effects of these tempers, to be assured of the impossibility of happiness to a human soul that is pursuing a course which must be supported by their assistance.

If I have ever received any true impression of the nature of the christian religion, it distinctively consists in the operations of Christ, the "wisdom and power of God," manifested in the flesh individually and collectively of all the rational creation,—as a spiritual fountain from which, and from which alone, all the streams of righteousness have ever flowed. This is the only "mediator between God and man." It is "the way,—the truth,—and the life." And no man can come, or ever did come to the Father, but by this spiritual and Divine birth, or "Son of God." He is not, and cannot be a person,—any more than wisdom and power can be persons;—but he is manifested in persons, and becomes in them the "wisdom of God" to instruct them, and "the power of God" to save them. He begins our salvation, by "convincing us of sin." He advances it, by "convincing us of righteousness." He completes it, by "delivering us from iniquity." His birth in man gives propriety to one of the appellations he has assumed, viz. the "son of man;" but God is

always his *Father*. And in his relation to human nature, the soul of man stands only in the state of maternity; but he comes always, and to every condition, "in the power of his Father, and with the holy angels,"—to divide and to separate all the good and evil that are in the world of man, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." To the *first*, he declares, "Come, ye blessed of my Father;"—not as conferring a new state of being which they had not before, but as declarative of their real nature and fitness to "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." And the children of men are made partakers of this blessing, which is unchangeably and eternally true of goodness, only whenever and in just proportion to the degree in which they feed, visit, clothe, and minister to the holy and heavenly principles which are the offspring of the Divine nature,—the brethren of Christ,—and the "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them that shall be the heirs of salvation." For, as they are the only powers by which intelligent beings can know the will of God, or do it—so, by entertaining these, they are enabled to know and do the will of their heavenly Father; and, as Christ himself has said, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Look at the reverse of this statement; and the sentence of "Go ye cursed," will be seen to apply essentially and necessarily, not to man in the abstract, but to men under the government of the principles of *evil*; the unchangeable and eternal nature of which is to torment and bewilder its subjects,—to desolate and

destroy that heavenly harmony and Divine order which alone constitute the "paradise of God."

How vain then is every effort to attain to the joys of God's salvation, or to avoid the horrors and miseries of evil,—by cultivating a belief in abstract systems, formed of diversified conjectures concerning *absent* and *unknown* things! Upon this ground, there always have been, still are, and always must be rents and divisions, strifes and contentions, with their mournful attendants,—“weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

But, Oh! my friend, if our fellow-creatures could be persuaded to forsake the “law of carnal commandments,” and accept of the offered and inestimable favour of “the power of an endless life,” how certainly would it illuminate their *darkness*,—in which there can be no true vision,—and give them “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (or real appearance) of Jesus Christ” himself;—the same Divine and heavenly Being “who created the world and all things that are therein,”—who is not limited in his manifestation to one person, or age, or generation, but is the same unchangeable Fountain of Life, which is the “true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” This would reveal to them the true atonement, as it regards themselves individually, that it consists not in the vicarious sufferings of another, but in the crucifixion of their own flesh with the lusts thereof,—by teaching and enabling them to deny themselves, and take up the same cross by which, in

all ages, he has crucified his votaries to the world, and the world to them.

I had no prospect, when I began a reply to thy kind letter, of running into a discussion of these things; but they opened to my view as I proceeded; and as I know them to be true and important, I feel free to submit them to thy inspection. I am induced to do this, not with the view to inform thee of things that I suspected thou wast unacquainted with; for I willingly assent to the belief that thy knowledge of Divine truth is superior to mine; but I feel great endearment of affection toward thee, and am not without a hope that it will give thee pleasure to receive a salutation of this kind from a brother.

I am, with much affection, thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Memorandums.

Truly it is a wonderful thing, that there should be any intelligent and accountable creature that can feel disposed to limit (if he had the power) the exercise of inquiry upon those subjects, in the truth of which every one is alike interested; more especially, when it is obvious that if man takes from his brother the privilege of knowing for himself, and compels him to repose his faith upon the *ipse dixit* of another, he does in reality deprive his brother of the means of happiness; and he accumulates responsibility upon himself, in exact proportion to the measure of the privation to which he subjects his brother. For I think it is self-

evident, that if I deprive another of the power or will of doing an indispensable act, I am the cause why that act is not done,—and therefore am accountable for the omission. This is a responsibility, in relation to concerns of eternal import especially, that I should tremble to assume; though it appears that many are disposed to court it as a desirable possession.

A happy and instructive emblem of the state of an *innocent mind*,—surrounded by the conflicting sentiments, and tumultuous excitements, and corruptions of the world in all its departments,—is afforded by the dove which went forth from Noah's ark over the earth, the surface of which was covered with the flood that had drowned its inhabitants, and destroyed its living productions. In this state of things, "she found no rest for the sole of her foot." Neither can the mind find rest or peace, after a similar visit, but by imitating her example, in returning inward to that *ark* which we are all Divinely instructed to build, (not of "gopher wood"—for that could only afford protection from a flood of *water*,—but) of the spiritual materials which God has abundantly given for the purpose, viz: the principles of goodness or righteousness; which "being joined and compacted together by that which every joint supplieth,"—does form a place of refuge and defence from all those perturbing and debasing influences, as real in its nature and saving power, in relation to the soul, as *Noah's* was in respect to animal life.

The subject of this memoir felt himself called by religious duty to attend a meeting of Friends, which was appointed to be held in Philadelphia in the 10th month of the year 1827; and also a session of the re-organized Yearly Meeting in the 4th month of the following year; for both of which services he obtained the sanction of the monthly meeting. Under the discouragements which at that time bore upon a large portion of the Friends of Philadelphia and the adjacent country, the presence of an influential and approved minister from a neighbouring Yearly Meeting, was rejoiced in as a favour. The assemblies for worship, on both those occasions, were crowded and solemn, and heavenly love greatly abounded. In the following letter to his wife, he gives a short account of his proceedings.

Abington, 4th mo. 29th, 1828.

MY DEAR MARY,—

This is two days more than a week since I wrote to thee from Philadelphia. I left there on second-day morning after the Yearly Meeting, and have attended a meeting every day since. The assemblies of the people were large, and in every instance we witnessed the accompaniment of profound solemnity. I feel that it is a season of renewed visitation to my own mind; and I believe it is so to many others. It has been preceded by a time of "treading down, and of perplexity;" and many, having passed through this, and arrived at a state where they feel all the elements of the storm and tempest to have subsided,—are enjoying the de-

lightful calm with great comfort. Towards this state, the exercises and openings which have engaged my attention and defined my duties, have been directed;—to explain and open the powers of the storm, and the elements of peace; and to turn the attention of my fellow-creatures to these, as the causes which Infinite Wisdom has rendered accessible to them;—the natures of which they have known, and the consequences of which have formed their experience: so that their faith may not rest in vague speculation, but on the basis of experimental Truth. * * * *

My friends, wherever I go, are as kind and attentive to me as my heart could wish; and almost in every instance they show as much kindness towards each other; which makes the intercourse with them doubly pleasant. But through all and with all, my heart's warmest attachments remain unalienated and without wandering from my precious family circle, which always must form the dearest centre around which (in this world) will revolve the love of thy affectionate

EDWARD STABLER.

Perhaps there was no period of his life when he was so warmly attached, as at this time, to his old acquaintances, and those whom his frequent journeys and the interesting condition of the Society, had lately introduced to him. The following letters, written after his return from this visit, bear ample testimony to the correctness of the above statement, and abound with deep instruction.

Alexandria, 5th mo. 16th, 1838.

MY DEAR A.,—

Thy kind letter by M. H. was very acceptable indeed, and required no apology nor excuse, but rather commendation, in that thou hadst summoned to thy aid so much of the power of a better principle than “selfishness,” (I mean *humility*) as to overcome the “pride” that would have prevented thee from conferring on thy absent friend so pleasant an evidence of thy friendship. I am persuaded it is thus also, that we are often prevented from coming to the Father of mercies, our kind and heavenly friend,—whose love is always extending itself towards us. But some mistaken view of his blessed character, which calls forth and nourishes some corrupting impulse in ourselves, that makes us afraid to approach him (incumbered with weaknesses and with errors) lest we become obnoxious to his *censure*, or victims to his *wrath*,—prevents us from accepting his offered benefactions, which would (if received) change all our views in relation to him, and enable us to know him to be in the *utmost reality*, “gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, and in truth.” And this change would be produced,—this lovely image would be delineated,—by the *very things themselves*, which he offers to our acceptance for the express purpose of changing us from the image of the earthly nature, in which we must “have tribulation,” into the image of the heavenly, where there is peace and joy forever. But these important effects are not wrought in us by *notions* or *conjectures* concerning these precious gifts, as they may be supposed to exist in the

Divine mind,—or as we may imagine them to operate on others: but they must be received by ourselves, and work by their own nature in us, to make us gracious, merciful, &c., in the same natural and self-evident way that anger does to make us angry,—or love, to make us affectionate.

Upon this point, as it appears to me, the question rests, in relation to the difference between the religion of Christ and that of anti-christ. The *first* is constituted by those living powers (or operations of the life of God in our souls) working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The other consists in theories and notions, and doctrines and opinions, which have neither life nor power to help or to save us. To the first, I invite thy earnest and continued attention,—as to a perpetually increasing treasure of wisdom and happiness, which, the more thou knowest of it, the more thou wilt love it. But Oh! let not any thing delude thee into a dependance upon the latter, which cannot bless thee, even now,—but will always disappoint thee in thy utmost need.

I was favoured to return in safety to my dear home and family, yesterday about two o'clock, and found all well, to my great comfort. I had been favoured through all my journey with a continued evidence of the kind regard of my heavenly Master, who now added this sweet evidence of his mercy, that he had also preserved my precious family, and restored me to them in health and safety.

The salutation of my love is presented to thy dear father and mother, sister and brothers,—and to such

of my friends in your neighbourhood as thou mayst meet with, particularly J. T. and wife. I went to see the latter in Philadelphia, and hope she may by this time be restored to her home. I should have been glad of thy company to Darby; but the roads were so much cut up, that much difficulty was associated with the journey, which thou escaped by not being with us. Farewell, my young friend; accept the best wishes and kindest salutations of thy very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 6th mo. 12th, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

A permanently crippled *right hand* renders it difficult for me to write, but I feel disposed to do what I can to deserve thy future communications, and to help forward the invaluable cause of righteousness, and also to advocate that "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" from the corrupting domination of erring and fallible human nature; which, from motives of self-aggrandizement, would subject all things to its own government, and set itself up as an object of homage, instead of God himself. For this is really done, in every instance where man presumptuously assumes to himself, and exercises the privilege of urging upon his fellows a conformity to dogmas and prescriptions—(*right* or *wrong*) by any other agency or power than the convincement of their understandings. If this point be conceded on their part, there is, at once and totally, an abandonment of their allegiance to the King of kings; and the more perfect their vassalage is, the

greater is the likelihood that they will be compelled to take "darkness for light, and light for darkness; evil for good, and good for evil." Witness the history of man in all ages, both as a civil and religious creature. What a multitude of gilded chains have been wound around him in both capacities! by which he has been dragged to their Moloch-altar, and his whole being, and rights, and happiness, sacrificed without compunction and without justice, to the God of this world. But, were such a disastrous sovereignty really beneficial to those who exercise it, there would be at least so much of an apology for them; but the contrary is necessarily true, and demonstrated to be so by all that we know of the Divine laws, and by all that we know of human experience. Like the *slave-holder*, they must first bring their own minds to submit to the government of the desolating powers of unrighteousness, before it is possible for them to enforce their influences upon others. This is self-evident from the fact that no man can act angrily, until himself is subject to anger; nor proudly, but by his obedience to pride, &c.

Now it is an indubitable truth, that the more unrighteous principles prevail in any mind, the greater is the misery of that mind; and the wider the range of its action is upon others, the more extended is the calamity of which it becomes the author; and *vice versa*. Every mind must be blessed, in proportion to the purity and holiness of the principles by which it is actuated; and the pure, peaceable, gentle, affectionate, and merciful mind must, by its example and all its operations upon others, have a necessary tendency to obviate their

distresses, and to enlarge the circle of their enjoyments.

These facts being notorious among mankind, it excites at once astonishment and regret, that there should be so much zeal and earnestness employed to turn their attention to other things, as essentially *good* or *evil*; and thereby to withdraw their homage from the "Fountain of living waters,"—the source from which all the streams of goodness flow,—and by the operation of which alone, it becomes possible for any member of the human family to be *made good*; or saved and cleansed from the *sufferings* and *defilements* of evil. But the generality of professors now (as in the days of George Fox) seem to be chiefly solicitous, both in respect to *themselves* and their *Saviour*, about the *body*, and the external things which are applicable to it alone. This appears to me to constitute the root of all the alleged differences about doctrines amongst Friends; and this has occasioned so many efforts to believe in and to inculcate a dependance upon things of an outward nature, and that exert no specific power in relation to the causes of their own good and evil,—to the consequent neglect of those things which assuredly, by all human experience, are the real, operative agents in these respects. The more, however, the stagnant pool is stirred and troubled, the more will the healing powers which have been hidden in it, become conspicuous. "Judges will be raised up as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning;" who being taught themselves in the school of Christ to know the instruments by which "God worketh in us, both to will and

to do of his good pleasure,"—will be compelled by all the feelings of love and kindness, to go forth and call the attention of their brothers and sisters to that birth of the Divine life within them, which constituted the Christ who was manifested in the Messiah, and still remains to be the "Immanuel,—God with us,"—"the Fountain of living waters,"—and "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

With the assurance that my best wishes are with thee, I remain thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 8th mo. 29th, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

The apostle Paul admonished one of the churches formerly to "Beware of dogs;—beware of evil workers;—beware of the concision." If this be understood even literally, there must have been something in dogs, evil workers, and in those of the concision, that rendered them hurtful and dangerous, and therefore to be avoided. And if such were to be avoided because of the injurious qualities which were in them, how much more ought these qualities themselves to be avoided, by which dogs, evil workers, &c. were rendered pernicious! I think this is the true spirit of the apostle's admonition;—and if I had a voice loud enough to be heard over the world, it should be employed to summon the attention of my fellow creatures to the *principles* and *powers* which must first be in them, and obeyed by them, before they can do either

good or evil. The same apostle above quoted, goes on to contrast the state of the dog, evil worker, and concision, with the condition most to be desired and pursued by himself and others. "We," he says, "are the circumcision who worship God *in spirit*,—rejoice in Christ Jesus,—*and have no confidence in the flesh.*" But what is the circumoision to which he alluded?—He tells us in another place, "Circumcision is of the heart,—*in the spirit, and not in the letter.*" (Rom. ch. ii. v. 28.) All this is confirmed by the experience of all men. It is known that *anger* must precede its own works, as certainly as that *love* must first exist, before the works of love can be performed. It is the same in relation to every good and every evil that is possible to man.

True Quakerism (which is true christianity) stands distinguished from every other religion in this eminent particular,—that it is altogether spiritual,—and only aims at accomplishing effects by means of their causes. Thus, it never aims at making the creature affectionate, but by means of love; nor merciful, but by means of mercy; nor good, but by means of goodness. And herein it demonstrates its origin to be from the fountain of Divine wisdom;—for through all nature and creatures, this is the method of God's proceeding.—"Holy men of old," as well as the righteous progenitors of our Society, came to a knowledge of the Life in them, from which these precious causes of all righteousness proceed. They obeyed its instructions, and became wise. They confided in its powers, and were

saved and redeemed. From the sameness of its effects in themselves, when obedient to its government, they witnessed it to be the same heavenly power which gave to saints their holiness, and to prophets their wisdom and foresight. In short, they found it to be "Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God," by whom the world was created and all things that are therein. The scriptures, which are a record of the operations of this Divine wisdom and power in the minds of their writers, became opened and understood by their successors, through the experience of the same things in themselves which had inspired and actuated the former; and they had thereby an evidence of their truth, superior to all human testimony.

But neither *they*, nor any who are the followers of the same Divine Leader, ever placed, or can place the scriptures in any other or higher position, than as the *writings of holy men*. They cannot ascribe to them any saving or redeeming power; though they truly confess that they bear a true testimony to *that* which can both save and redeem. The understanding of "the natural man, who receiveth not the things of the spirit of God," has made a wonderful medley out of its conjectures about the meanings of the words of the "holy men of old:"—and this medley constitutes what it denominates its religion. The most acute of human minds have endeavoured to form consistent structures out of these imagined meanings:—but discord and confusion, chaos and contradiction, every where and in all ages, have stamped their most ingenious efforts

with defeat;—and they have all had in succession to resort to *mystery* to conceal the deformities in their systems, which would otherwise have been too glaring to admit of their being received by any rational mind.

I remain thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 8th mo. 30th, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

What the report thou alludest to can have arisen from, I know not; but it is certain that such a conflict with a lawyer, or with any body else upon the subject stated, never occurred to me at any time that I know of. That I may, more than once, from the gallery and in conversation, have made use of the incident of the young man coming to Jesus, &c., as an illustration of the state of man, after obeying by his own best powers an outward law, commanding outward actions and observances, is, I think, highly probable. In one case, I remember to have done it in a meeting at Alexandria; and I did state, that however great our possessions of that kind of righteousness might be, as it was altogether outward, the soul would be left in poverty; because it might still be proud, obdurate, fierce, &c., and this state would prevent the peace of the soul, and very naturally induce an inquiry similar to that of the young man, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And then, I went on to show that a *sale* implied an *exchange* of commodities,—a thing to be *parted with*, and something else as the price, to be re-

ceived instead of it. And his obedience to those particulars of the outward law that were then mentioned, not having enriched his mind, (neither would outward things enrich the mind of any other human being, but the soul would still *be poor*, if it had not the "treasure in heaven")—to obtain this treasure, he must sell all that he has,—all that is *properly his own*;—*all that keeps him in poverty, and prevents him from inheriting eternal life*. I then stated what some of these things were; and the price that would be given to us for them, if we were willing to sell them, viz:—If we would give up our *pride*, we should have *humility* in place of it. Our *obduracy* might be exchanged for *tenderness of heart*; and our *fierceness*, for *gentleness*, &c. And *these things being spiritual, and appertaining both in nature and quality to the soul*, they would make it "rich toward God;"—and become to it *treasures in heaven* which is constituted of "*righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*."

EDWARD STABLER.

The first of the following series of letters, may be compared with one which he wrote to his sister-in-law from Petersburg, in the year 1791; [see page 23] in which he quotes the expressions of Job as then applicable to himself: "I go forward but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." The difference between the anxious uncertainty which he felt in the first instance, and the happy assurance in the second, is remarkable and instructive.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 22nd, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I hope I feel in some degree as I ought, the kindness and confidence which thou hast expressed towards me: and if my ability were equal to my wishes, I should not only repay them in kind, (which I do most cordially) but I would gladly convert their effects into an occasion for introducing thy precious mind to a more intimate acquaintance with those "ministering spirits," whose presence in the human soul always announces the advent of the *universal* Messiah, as "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" for they proceed from him, and through them he "convinces the world of sin,—of righteousness,—and of judgment."

My heart is often warmed with inexpressible endearment toward those who, like the queen of the south in relation to Solomon, have "*heard* of the wisdom" and goodness of this *greater than he*; but who, "receiving (by tradition and education) for doctrines the commandments of men,"—are directing their attention *outward, backward, and forward*, where "they cannot perceive him:"—and, finding themselves disappointed of salvation from the causes which defile and distress them, are under the necessity of still inquiring "where he feedeth, and where he maketh his flock to rest at noon." These feelings have been especially excited in relation to the *young*, whose length of days has not been sufficient to afford them enlarged experience; but whose sensitive and intelligent minds are hungering and thirsting for the real (not speculative) food and

drink, that *will* nourish the soul, and "spring up unto everlasting life."

I am entirely persuaded, that if these would consult the records of *the book of life*, instead of the indefinite imaginings which are excited in their minds by the sayings and the writings of others, they would find in the characters which compose that living volume, an exposition too plain to be misunderstood, of the *real* causes of all the good and evil that ever blessed or afflicted an intelligent creature. And it is from the realities which *are there only to be found*, that all true declarations of an outward nature relative to these things, can alone be understood. For, it is self-evident that no description of *love* or *enmity*, *content* or *inquietude*, could possibly be understood by a being who had never experienced either of them.

I am experimentally acquainted with the sorrows of that state which "goeth about the city, in the *streets*, and in the *broad-ways*," seeking the Beloved, and not finding him. My feelings in that condition have been distressed, even to agony: and while trembling, hopeless, and disconsolate under the dreadful pressure,—surrounded also with darkness and confusion, the mournful persuasion of my heart was, that my heavenly Father had "forsaken me." But in this experience, I was (without then knowing it) a partaker of the sufferings of Christ, in a measure adequate to my ability to bear them. But I have now no doubt, that the awful process was for the purpose of "crucifying the flesh, with the lusts thereof;"—and that, in pro-

portion as this was accomplished, the veil was rent which concealed from my view the contents of "the holy of holies."

For, whereas the capacities of the "natural man" are limited to "natural things," and his homage and dependance are altogether upon them, and "the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to him;"—it is evident, that while they have the ascendancy, they operate as a veil to the soul, which hides from its perceptions that countless train of spiritual realities, which are at once appropriate and powerful to *refine and to bless* it. That veil, therefore, must be rent by a crucifying process which has the natural man for its victim; and in proportion as its life *declines*, the concealing medium is dissipated; and when it *expires*, "the veil is rent from the top to the bottom,—the earth quakes,—the rocks are rent," and those heavenly powers and principles which have always given to saints their holiness, "arise from their graves," in which they have been buried under earthly desires and interests,—and hopes and fears,—"and show themselves" to the renovated mind, as God's "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be the heirs of salvation."

But though these powers are expressed by *distinct appellations*, they are not different nor separate from the Divine life which is manifested in the souls of the people; but are indeed its own operations, diversified in *name only*, by the diversity of condition upon which its unchangeable nature operates. Thus, the same

Divine energy which acts as *love*, and destroys enmity and hatred,—also operates as *justice*, to destroy injustice, and to render its votaries just, &c. &c.

I received a letter from thy dear father by the same hand which was the bearer of thine. It is almost needless to say that it was cordially acceptable, and that my best feelings and wishes will go with him in his contemplated journey.

Thou wilt probably have heard before this gets to hand, of the division of Ohio Yearly Meeting, and the attending circumstances. And I am still unchanged in the belief, that this scene of *earthquake, wind, and fire*, will prepare many minds to recede from the commotions produced by them; for they cannot but perceive that the Lord is not in them. And I hope that many will be induced to turn a more attentive ear to that “still, small voice,” which can at once *instruct* and *empower, redeem* and *save*.

Need I tell my young friend that I have great pleasure in corresponding with her, and that she occupies a prominent station in the attachment which binds the whole family to the heart of her affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 9th mo., 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

It is one among the apostolic precepts, to “rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;” and in that sympathy or fellow-feeling for each other, of which we are all capable, the ability is felt to comply with the admonition. Much of this sympathy was

awakened toward thee, upon the reception of thy last letter. The injury thy son had sustained would, I knew, had the case been mine, have excited many distressing feelings; particularly as long as his case remained doubtful, or the prospect of recovery uncertain. Add to this, the exercises of thy mind in relation to the most important of all subjects to thyself and thy fellow-beings, and the apparent impediments which existed to a coalition of efforts between thee and others for the advancement of the precious cause of righteousness.

I have many times reflected with much seriousness upon the subject of thy receding from thy connection with religious society. Without, however, presuming to call in question its propriety at the time it occurred, I feel a willingness to suggest some views for thy consideration. The dispensations of our heavenly Father to the children of men, are addressed to them as *rational, sensitive, and social* beings. The qualities or principles which render them such, are of his creation;—and they cannot break the marriage covenant which he has established among them, without impairing that happiness in themselves and usefulness to others, for which they were brought into being. All our experience demonstrates the immense importance of the rational, sensitive, and social relations of man to his fellow-man. It shows again, the blessedness of these relations to be increased in measure and in power, in proportion to the dominion of goodness and of virtue over them. It is therefore the duty and interest of every one, not only to cultivate these in himself, but to promote their increase in every other person

over whom he can exert any degree of influence; because the happiness of each one is always increased in proportion to the happiness of the whole. But if he separate himself from them, or so change his relations to them as to sacrifice the occasion of exciting this influence, he severs the connection between his own sensitive, rational, and social qualities, by thus depriving one of them of its proper sphere to act in; and each one, with all its appendages, languishes and suffers a declension, in equal measure.

It is unhappily too true, that the great majority of human beings have fixed their attention and dependance upon outward things and actions, as the means of that happiness for which every human soul feels an irrepressible desire. Many, in the present day, are inculcating a dependance upon individual conjectures concerning outward and visible things and actions that *once were*, but *are no longer either present, or visible*: and these are inattentive to the teachings of the omnipresent, spiritual Power, who is the sole fountain of all goodness and virtue, as well as the Creator of all sensitive, rational, and social beings. But surely this dereliction of all true and efficient knowledge,—like the want of health or the presence of anguish,—ought to render those who are affected by it, objects of tender compassion to minds that are in any degree illuminated by the heavenly vision which Daniel witnessed, when he saw the Ancient of days sitting in *present* judgment; and “the fiery stream” which “issued and came forth from before him,”—the “thousand thousands which ministered to him,” and “the ten thousand

times ten thousand which stood before him,"—to be realized in the innumerable host of powers and principles, by which Divine benevolence is continually working in the souls of his creatures to "subdue all things to himself;"—that He, the glorious sun of righteousness, "*may be all in all.*" But I need not pursue the subject further. My dear friend will reflect upon it, and as the decision must be his own, I can cheerfully leave it to himself.

With sympathy of feeling, I remain,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 26th, 1898.

I hope my young friend has not permitted her heart to censure me for suffering her last very acceptable communication to remain so long unanswered. My apology for the delay will be found in my absorbed attention during our Yearly Meeting, and in having had to attend our Quarterly meeting and several other meetings since,—the Quarter at seventy miles distant from Alexandria.

Thou hast heard, I expect, that a division took place in our Yearly Meeting; but it was without storm or tumult,—owing probably to the smallness of the number that went off. But the course for us to pursue in this case, is, to be more careful and attentive to cultivate *right principles* in ourselves, than to detect and expose *wrong ones* in the minds of others.

When Peter, as a disciple of Jesus, had received his Master's instructions in regard to what he was to do, *thrice repeated*, "Feed my sheep;—feed my lambs;—

feed my sheep;"—he indulged or gave way to a curiosity (very natural to man) to know the concerns of his brother: "What shall this man do?" But he was met by the instructive admonition, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee? *Follow thou me.*" There *may be*, and I am generally persuaded there *will be* a great reformation among men, growing out of the present commotions, which have caused so much anxiety to many tender and well-disposed minds. And I think it will arise from the spirit of inquiry, which will be more and more excited among thousands, who, in respect to what constitutes *religion*, have habitually taken all things for granted, without pondering the subject, even so far as to become ascertained of what it was that they were taking for granted. In this state of mind, an indefinite and obscure image of something awful or interesting which had its existence in past time, or was to have an existence in futurity, is all they know about it. And where this is the case, it appears impossible that a living and earnest devotion can be incited, in relation to things which are at once vague, absent, and uncertain. But when they have seen others satisfied with such a state of things, they have been disposed to fall in with the popular current: and as others risked all upon this foundation, it was hoped that it would fare as well with them as with the rest.

This has been the parent of that apathy which has so generally prevailed, and which is still conspicuous, in relation to the most interesting and important of all possible subjects. And this has been the cause why

the human mind *has been*, and *is*, so easily led captive by doctrines and opinions which, however sedulously they may be urged and adopted, possess no power to *save from sin*, nor to *produce righteousness*. Something then was necessary to arouse this *dormant* into *activity*, and to shake the *dry bones* in this *valley of stupor and of death*. The agent which is now at work *by the voice of prophecy*, appears from its effects to be producing this result; and many a "dry bone" has already been animated and brought to "hear the voice of the Lord," instead of the voice of men. They have rushed to each other under the impulse of love,—christian love; and the "mighty army" is daily increasing. This is cause for thankfulness to the Father of mercies, notwithstanding the pangs which precede the precious consummation.

To the young whose minds have not yet been veiled with prejudices, the present is an important era. They may see, if they will, how valueless and unprotecting are all *forms* and *professions*—all *creeds* and *systems*—in their evident incapacity to preserve those who have most abounded with them (and who were pointed out as way-marks to others) from the tyranny of passions and dispositions, the unchangeable tendency of which is, to change "Eden into a *wilderness*," and the "*garden of the Lord*" into a "desert." For surely, such is the state of every mind that is governed by similar tempers to those which rule in the natives of the wilderness. The lion is not more fierce, nor the tiger more cruel, than the unsubdued passions of the human mind. The asp does not more certainly poison, nor

the rattlesnake envenom, than the malice and hatred of the unredeemed human heart. These then, and such like, are the *adversaries* to be avoided,—the *enemies* to be resisted,—the *devils* to be cast out. And for this purpose, the blessed Head of the church giveth liberally to all the children of men the principles and powers of goodness. If they will accept of the heavenly donation, and use these “good and perfect gifts” when bestowed upon them, they will heal all their maladies,—cast out all their evil spirits,—restore their spiritual sensibility,—and rouse them from a death “in trespasses and sins,” into the life of “righteousness, peace, and joy.” For the objects of the christian’s faith are not fictions nor cunningly devised fables,—but the self-evident realities of grace, mercy, truth, goodness, love, justice, &c., each and all of which have “charge over us, to keep us in all our ways,” and to deliver and preserve us from all that “can hurt or destroy.” Thus it is that “the wilderness may be again changed into an Eden, and the desert into a garden of the Lord.” “Joy and gladness” may take the places of “sorrow and sighing;” and “thanksgiving and the voice of melody,” succeed to “weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

See then, my dear friend, the immense importance of the counsel given to Peter: “Feed my sheep;—feed my lambs;—feed my sheep.” There is no evidence that Jesus ever was a shepherd, or ever owned any sheep, in the outward sense of the words. But he certainly intended to convey an impressive and solemn meaning by the use of them: and this is found in the

innocence, gentleness, and meekness which characterize these harmless creatures. And these qualities, if fed with their appropriate food, will as certainly grow and increase, and enrich their possessor, as ever Abraham or Job knew an increase of their outward flocks and herds, and became mighty men through the abundance which they produced.

If my letters to thee can be of any use to others, I have no wish that thou shouldst keep them to thyself. I wish it were in my power to write a fairer hand; but contracted fingers and a tremulous hand, forbid the hope that I ever shall. Please remember me to thy mother, brothers and sisters, and to all my friends at B., and there are many precious ones who share the best feelings of

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 1829.

The first letter of the new year I shall address to my young friend M. J., and while I express my best wishes that the greatest of blessings may be hers, I am solicitous that I may be enabled, through Divine assistance, to point her attention to those things by which more blessings may be realized in her experience, than I can either ask for or think of. The views expressed in thy letter, made a proper distinction in stating "*the kingdom of heaven to be within us.*" And here I feel the importance of not only knowing that it is there, but of ascertaining infallibly what it consists in; that we may not be deceived nor disappointed by mistaking any thing else for it, and thus place

our dependance, upon something that will fail us in our utmost need.

The greatest difficulty I have ever had to encounter in this momentous inquiry, has arisen from the host of prejudices, or the impressions made upon my mind by my own conceivings, when I read or heard of these things. These conceptions acquired a character of sacredness, from the subjects to which they were supposed to relate; so that when they were assaulted, even by Truth itself, I trembled with the apprehension that I was rebelling against Divine authority, by permitting one stone of this temple (though built by myself) to be stirred or pushed down. When I read the scriptures, or listened to preaching, or conversation on religious subjects, the same veil was over my mind, and prevented me from seeing or knowing any thing, as indicated in any of these, but the same religious edifice; every part of which had been hewn and squared, and fitted by myself.

How different was all this from the statement left on record by the illustrious Paul! "The kingdom of heaven," he says, "is not meat and drink, but *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" And again, a prophet has written, "The work of *righteousness* shall be *peace*, and the *effect of it, quietness and assurance* forever." The scriptures abound with references to these living principles, and all human experience confirms the truth of their testimony. But our ignorance of the true nature of the religion of Christ, (which has power to save, and does save,) has made it to consist in opinions, and particular forms of ex-

pression, of which the evil and the good are alike capable; but which, at the same time, never deliver the mind from evil, nor enrich it with the treasures of goodness.

My experience therefore has taught me that there is as great a distinction between the christian religion, and the most perfect structure which the greatest wisdom of man has ever been able to build,—as there is between food, and the most perfect theories of eating, drinking, and nutrition, that ever were learned or committed to memory. For, as in the latter case, a man would infallibly famish with all his theoretical knowledge, if he had not *food* and *drink*; so, in the former also, except he have the living principles of righteousness, he cannot see, nor enter into the kingdom of heaven,—nor know the peace, quietness, and everlasting assurance which are the effects of these principles only: for it is by these principles that our Heavenly Parent “worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

I had written thus far, when my pen was arrested by sickness, which confined me to the house, and rendered me unable to write for nearly two weeks. I will now resume my pen and add a few lines. I suppose it is impossible for any person, at first, to avoid erecting the building above alluded to; seeing that every parent feels solicitous for the happiness of his child, and endeavours to instruct it. While this process of instruction is going on, the child—if at all attentive—is employing itself in forming ideas of the things the parent is speaking of; and these ideas, on

the part of the child, are a mass of mere conjectures about unknown things.

I am, with much sincerity, thy friend,

E. S.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 15th, 1829.

The trembling hand of an invalid just recovering from a two week's attack of sickness, is now employed to thank my young friend for her very acceptable letter. I deem it a privilege of no ordinary magnitude which is enjoyed by the young people of our Society, that from their earliest years they are made familiar with the words, "The kingdom of heaven is within you,"—"That which is to be known of God, is made manifest within you," &c. And I congratulate my young correspondent, that her views have been directed into the same channel by her affectionate parents and friends; of which her letter contains abundant evidence. But I was also favoured in the same way; and yet much of my life passed away with nothing better than conjectural ideas of what these things meant. My mind was indeed impressed with a vague conception of something blessed and glorious, to be known for the first time after the death of the body, without once thinking, or stopping to inquire, why the same thing which it was believed would produce these blessed and glorious effects *hereafter*, should not also (according to their measure) produce the same effects *now*, agreeably to the obvious meaning of the above scripture passages; for thou wilt observe that both of them are made in the present tense. How greatly

important then it is, not only to know that the kingdom of heaven is within us,—but to be assured with infallible certainty what it consists of; lest, by mistaking any thing else for it, we may be deluded into a dependance upon something that will disappoint us in our utmost need, and render our experience accordant with the poet's expressions, "Man never *is*, but always *to be* blessed."

The venerated and invaluable volume of the scriptures, gives a very different account of this interesting concern, from the general imaginings of mankind in relation to it. Whether we consult the historical or preceptive parts of it, they alike declare that human nature ever has been made good, and happy, and acceptable in the Divine sight, by *righteousness*;—and bad, miserable, and unacceptable; by *wickedness*.—That no theory, however correct,—no profession, however pure,—has ever been an effectual substitute for *goodness*, any more than clear ideas of food and drink can answer the purposes of nutrition, instead of the articles which really nourish,—is alike conspicuous to all human nature. But this is not more plain nor more certain, than that the real presence and power of holiness is necessary to make men holy.

The deceptive theories, notions, and opinions, which men have dignified with the name of the *Christian Religion*, ought to be tested by their fruits. If they have not power to save us from wickedness and misery *now*, what stronger evidence can we have that they will always be alike ineffectual? And what stronger reason can we have for renouncing all dependance upon

them, than this evident incapacity to save us, or make us happy? Our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, opened this matter clearly, and showed what it was that had power to bless us. "Blessed," he says, "are the pure in heart,—the peace makers,—the merciful,—the poor in spirit,—the hungerers and thirsters after righteousness," &c. Not one word about believing this or that opinion or doctrine, maintained by this or that society; or contended for by this or that learned man! He well knew, what his apostle afterwards knew and proclaimed, that "the kingdom of God was not in *word* but in *power*;" and all experience says the same thing: for the power of *love* is that alone which can make any of us affectionate; and the power of *justice* makes us just; and the power of *holiness* makes us holy, &c.

And these, my young friend, are the *living words* of that *living law* which the Lord said he would write in the hearts of his people; by obedience to which he would "be their God," and they "should be his sons and daughters." For, as all outward laws are made up of many written words, and all these words combined, form the codes of outward laws which are inscribed upon paper, or some other outward material: so the law of God is constituted of those spiritual words which Christ said are "spirit and life;" and consequently are not dead or material, (as all written and printed words are;) neither are they written on paper nor "tablets of stone," but upon the table of the heart; nor are they "written with pen and ink, but by the finger of the living God." For it is he alone who

gives us love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, humility, patience, justice, godliness, and every other "good and perfect gift." And they are evidently spiritual and vital, and are the only means that our heavenly Father hath appointed to make us free from the "law of sin and death." They therefore (and not written words) compose or form the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus;" and we always find them "*within us*," operating and working within us to make us affectionate, joyful, peaceable, gentle, true, meek, humble, &c.; or, in one word, opening the "kingdom of heaven within us," which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

These are the blessed and beautifying powers, or operations of the life of God, (which is the "Christ in us") that I wish most earnestly to turn thy attention to, as unto a light that will never delude thee,—a dependance that will never disappoint thee,—a heavenly friend that will never forsake thee. Thou wilt find it as much superior to the noblest edifice that ever was formed by human ingenuity, as heaven is above earth. Thy own brightest conjectures will become dark before the splendour of its realities; and thy spirit will no longer languish in uncertainty, or be under the necessity of inquiring of others if they "have seen him whom thy soul loveth;" for, in passing from every external thing or dependance but a little, thou wilt find him; and he will be infallibly known to thee by "his works:" for it is he who writes these living words upon our hearts; and by these *he* is at once made known, and "the way, the truth, and the life," explain-

ed to us, and we are made partakers of all that is made known.

My affectionate salutations are presented to thy dear parents, and to A. and E. H. I feel greatly interested for them; believing their hearts, as "good ground," are prepared to bring forth "fruit unto life eternal." Tell A. that her very acceptable letter came duly to hand, and that I shall answer it shortly, if life and health permit. Farewell; and believe me to be with much truth of affection,

Thy sincere friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 14th, 1829.

MY DEAR C.,—

The tender, parental affection which I have ever felt for thee since I first became acquainted with thee, prepared me to form one of the *rejoicers*; at the arrival of thy letter to my dear A. When I heard of thy increased indisposition, though I sorrowed, yet it was not without hope on thy behalf. My spirit had become acquainted with thine; and in the features of innocence which I saw impressed upon ~~it~~ I read the assurance that He whose infinite goodness had thus far delineated his blessed image upon thee, would not leave the heavenly portrait unfinished. I still feel the same persuasion, and look forward with confidence and rejoicing, to the certainty that the Divine law of love which is legibly written upon thy heart, will go on to enlarge thy perfections and enjoyments. I think thou knowest its powers for these purposes.—

Thou hast witnessed its living influences to calm thy agitated mind in times of trial and suffering, when all external assistance was vain and fruitless; when even the sovereignty of the world, its riches, and powers, and friendships, could have done nothing for thee.

These realities form the true ground of the christian's hope: not that he is wise in *theories*, and skilful in *doctrines*;—not that he is learned in the *opinions* of men, ancient or modern; but because “the finger of the living God” has written upon his heart the characters of “love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, truth, meekness, faith, patience, temperance,” &c. These are all vital, and will produce their natural effects as certainly as the fig tree produces figs, or the grape vine, grapes. I have often felt it to be cause for unspeakable gratitude to the Father of mercies, that he has not made our present or eternal happiness dependant upon the uncertain and variable opinions of men; but upon this living law, of his own writing upon our hearts. For the characters which constitute it are all appropriate to our several necessities: they are the means of his appointment for carrying us through, and bringing us out of “great tribulation;” and without their influence “no flesh would be saved.” These are “the elect,” for whose sake, and by whose operations, the days of tribulation are “shortened.” They are the Lord's household; and thou, and I, and all our fellow-creatures are made “rulers over them, to give them their meat in due season;” and we are “blessed,” in proportion to our diligence in “so doing.”—We feel, and know, that power is bestowed upon us

to feed the *elect-principles of goodness*;—that we can give to “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity,” or Divine love; the food they require and call for, in order to be sustained and multiplied in our minds.—And if they “be in us and abound; *they make us,*” as the apostle says, “that we shall be neither barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I speak in this language to thee with much confidence, from a full persuasion that much of it has been realized in thy experience. Thou mayst be assured of it beyond all questioning, by contrasting the state of thy feelings, during thy long protracted sickness, with what would have been thy condition, hadst thou nurtured and cultivated the *reprobated principles of evil*. If thou hadst gratified the hunger of infidelity,—vice, ignorance, intemperance, impatience, ungodliness, enmity, and hatred,—how awful and distressing, beyond all the powers of description, would have been the state of thy mind, when associated with the sorrows of bodily disease!

“By their fruits,” my young friend, “thou mayst know them” more infallibly than by any, or all human teaching. And these will demonstrate, and they always have demonstrated, that the flames of hell are the *powers of evil*;—and that nothing will extinguish, or prevent their burning, but the *principles of righteousness*;—the “good and perfect gifts which come from above, from the Father of lights,” who is also our heavenly Father; and these *are infallible* for the gracious

purpose, The heavenly life,—the “Christ within,”—“the well of water, springing up” within us “unto everlasting life,”—is the eternal Fountain from which all the streams of righteousness forever flow. And it would be more possible for a building on fire, to continue burning when immersed in the ocean,—or to be kindled there,—than for the flames of wickedness to burn in the soul that is immersed in “the river of the water of life,” and washed by its pure and crystalline streams.

All my family remember thee with great affection, and send thee their cordial salutations; but from no heart among them does such a salutation issue with more fervour and sincerity, than from that of thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 20th, 1839.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Did I not know from my own experience, the mighty power which is exercised over our feelings and understandings, by the bewildering influences of education and early impressions, (fostered also by kindred and equally imperfect impressions, acting upon us through an intercourse with others,) I should think it astonishing that so many of us could be deluded into the persuasion, that religion consists in such things as the generality of mankind seem to believe it does; and this too with the scriptures in their hands,—which in almost every page give so different an account of the matter. For the historical incidents, and direct alle-

gations with which they abound, ascribe the re-union of the creature with the Creator, to proper and adequate causes.

The scribes and pharisees were *hypocrites*, and suffered under the *woe*, because they depended upon "tything the mint, anise, and cummin, and all manner of herbs," for the accomplishment of those purposes which *justice, mercy, and truth* were only able to perform. Hence it was, that though the former did for them all that Divine wisdom intended, yet the mint could not perform the works of justice; nor anise those of mercy; nor cummin produce the effects of truth.— These things remain invariable; and all nature and experience bear concurrent testimony with the scriptures, to the absurdity of expecting from *weaker* things than even "herbs," the blessed attainments which crown the soul with "glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life." And are not the creeds, and notions, and systems of men, *weaker* than the "*herbs*?" The former, it is undeniable, are variform, uncertain; and contradictory. The best of them cannot satisfy even the hunger of an insect,—while the latter are of Divine manufacture,—beautiful in their structure, admirable in their form, and indispensable to the sustenance of man and all other animals. But with all their perfection, they are limited in their services to their native sphere. We must resort to other powers of a far nobler kind, as the steps of that ladder by which to ascend from earth to heaven: and these, through the kindness of our heavenly Father, are as certainly given to us for this blessed purpose, as "all

manner of herbsⁿ are bestowed for temporal uses;— and are withal, absolutely perfect for the ends to be accomplished by them.

Oh! why will the sons and daughters of men refuse to contemplate the glorious fact, that justice, mercy, and truth are veritable powers, by which the Father of mercies will make them, if they are willing, just, merciful, and true; and thereby remove far from them all hypocrisy and every woe! It is the same with every good and perfect gift that cometh from above, and they constitute the steps by which a man may ascend from earth to heaven.

With much love, I remain thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

In the year 1829, Edward Stabler felt himself called in christian love to visit his friends at the two Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and New York; for which purpose he obtained the concurrence of his monthly meeting. Some account of these two journeys will be found in the following letters.

To his Wife.

Philadelphia, 4th mo. 16th, 1829.

MY DEAR MARY,—

Thy letter I received last evening, much to my satisfaction, on account of the grateful information of your continued health. The Yearly Meeting has thus far been even more interesting than it was last year. A large body of serious and sober-minded Friends, assembled under the general influence of love to each

other, and to promote the prevalence of the causes which tend to the glory of God as their highest object, "and on earth peace, good will towards men,"—is one of the most interesting objects I ever beheld.

My health has been good, and my mind wonderfully supported, and supplied with ability to perform the service which my gracious Master requires of me; for which all its feelings are bowed in gratitude.

As I hope to be with my dear domestic circle in less than a week, I need not enlarge the present communication; since I have given all the information which is of immediate interest to you. I shall therefore conclude with the expression of continued love to every one, from your very affectionate

EDWARD STABLER.

New York, 5th mo. 30th, 1829.

The Yearly Meeting is over. It has been conducted all through upon christian grounds. No jar, no contest, no opposing efforts for power, were made; but the feeling of brotherly kindness, forbearance, and condescension, which is the crown of a religious assembly, prevailed at every sitting. The concluding session of the select meeting, was one of the most solemn and edifying that I ever was a witness to. We were favoured to partake "of the waters of life freely;" and for a season all sense of "sorrow and sighing" fled away, I believe, from every mind. The "demonstration of the Spirit" assured us from what fountain the favour flowed; and our feelings were satisfied by its power, that it was "of God and not of man."

Our public meetings were large; and in every instance, it was thought that half as many went away for want of room to receive them, as stayed and were accommodated. My prospect is to stay in this city until the day after to-morrow; when I expect to attend an appointed meeting at Flushing; then return to New York, and on third-day morning proceed upon my visit to New Jersey. I do not anticipate any difficulty about companions, or modes of conveyance; for my friends are so abundantly affectionate, that there is shown the greatest readiness to supply both.

The calm, affectionate, gentle, and innocent state of mind of our young friend —, who has been here and returned to her father's house,—remove every feeling of regret, at the prospect of her connection with time being dissolved in the morning of life; because of the strong assurance which they afford, that the gracious Power who has adorned her quiet spirit with these jewels of eternity, will not remove her to any state of being in which their magnitude and multitude will not increase, to the proportionate enlargement of her joy and her consolation. She desired me to give her love to all the members of my precious household, and so also did her kind parents.

I am told the report has been circulated that Friends' Yearly Meeting was a scene of great tumult, confusion, and even quarreling: but we witnessed, to our great comfort, that it was in all its sittings the reverse of all this.

And my little son got through with his sickness safely? For this mercy as well as for all others, may

I be thankful to the Father of mercies. * * Will some of you please to write to me again, as soon as you receive this? You all know how dearly I love you; and could you behold the pleasure it gives me to read your letters, when thus separated from you, I think you would indulge me with them more frequently. Several might write in one letter, and each tell me some interesting circumstance relative to my beloved family. With unabated love, I am thy own

EDWARD STABLER.

Upper Freehold, New Jersey, 6th mo. 6th, 1829.

Agreeably to what I mentioned in my letter from New York, I went to Flushing to an appointed meeting on last second-day, and attended it to satisfaction;—the gracious Helper giving both matter and power of utterance, to the evident promotion of edification and comfort. * * I had an evening meeting at Trenton, which was largely attended, and it was indeed a favoured opportunity. The next day I attended one at East Branch; and this evening, am to attend one at Bordentown; to-morrow at Crosswicks, and so on. I am favoured with entire health, and meet with open hearts and houses among Friends, who are promptly disposed to do all they can for my comfort and the forwarding of my prospects of religious service. But, “my heart untravelled, fondly turns to” my precious wife and children, with ardent supplications for their health and preservation. I feel that every one of you is a cord, by which my affections are bound to this world with greater strength than all others; but I feel

no condemnation for loving you, while my affections are kept in due subordination to the higher obligations of duty to you and my heavenly Father and Preserver; and I am persuaded that as our love to each other is governed and regulated by these considerations, the sum of our mutual enjoyment will be increased, but not impaired.

I will write again from Moorestown, or soon after I leave there, and give you a further account of my proceedings. And whether it shall be my lot to suffer or enjoy, I trust I shall remain, with undiminished love,
your own

EDWARD STABLER.

To his Wife.

Westfield, 6th mo. 18th, 1829.

I do not know, my dear Mary, that I ever received greater pleasure from the reception of a letter, than from the one I received yesterday at Moorestown, from thee and my dear sons. It was the next thing, in point of enjoyment, to having your presence around me. And to be informed that my precious Master had preserved you all in health, and that my dear little boys, Henry and Richard, had been pretty good children,—and to hear of my dear little Frances, and my sweet little Caroline,—and about my dear Elizabeth and her good health, and of Robinson and his Mary Annis, and William and his Deborah,—it was delightful! But what about my precious little Sarah? Her name is not mentioned. Was she so still and retired, that you all overlooked or forgot her? Well! my heart did

glow with thankfulness for the favour of your general preservation; and I have abundant cause for thankfulness to the same Divine source of blessings, for my own uninterrupted health, and for the extreme kindness of my friends, and for his presence and blessed help in all the meetings I have attended.

At Moorestown yesterday,—doctor John Moore and his Catherine came over and attended meeting with me, and a large and precious meeting it was. As George Fox used to say, "Truth reigned over all:" and so it has been every where.

I make a poor hand at writing; but if I should be favoured to get once more into the bosom of my beloved family, many things that I would now say with the pen, if I were a ready writer, will then be agreeable subjects of conversation.

I do not know that I ever had a fuller evidence of being in the way of my duty, than in the present journey. The ability to labour in word and doctrine, was never greater in my experience. The power of spiritual vision indeed seems to be as clear as noon-day.

Farewell! And may the blessings of peace, innocence, and preservation, be yours continually, prays the heart of your own

EDWARD STABLER.

Wilmington, Del. 7th mo. 13th.

Your joint letter of last week, my dear Mary, came to hand this morning; and though it contains some abatement of the pleasant information which had filled your preceding communications, by the state-

ment of my dear little Caroline's indisposition, and my dear Thomas's return of liver disease; yet still I feel thankful that the rest of you are preserved in health. I visited all the meetings of the Western Quarter last week, and had an appointed meeting at Stanton, and came to Wilmington last evening. A public meeting is appointed for me here, to be held this evening; to which the inhabitants are generally invited. To-morrow I expect to attend a meeting at Chester, my mother's birth place;—go the next day to Providence, the next to Darby, and then to Philadelphia. So far as I see at present, I hope then to turn my steps towards home,—*dear home*,—and toward thee and the rest of my precious ones *who make that home so dear*.

Truly, the works of our gracious Creator are "great and marvellous,—just and true!" and the openings and ability, which he has graciously afforded for the performance of the services which he has required of me in the course of this journey, have sealed upon my spirit the truth of the exclamation. I desire to be preserved in a state of continued thankfulness for his unspeakable favours and mercies. * * The meetings I have attended have continued to be seasons of great solemnity; some of them memorably so;—and in social intercourse, where, according to the apostolic rule, "all may speak one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted,"—the opportunities have been no less interesting and edifying. It seems indeed to be a time of singular visitation to the people; and their hearts appear to be prepared, and preparing for an increase of knowledge, in respect to the nature of

the gospel of Christ, its mode of manifestation, and the manner of its operations upon the human soul, in redeeming it from all iniquity.

My health continues unimpaired. I have scarcely felt a pain that was worthy of the name, since I left thee. How different *this result* has been from my awful forebodings, and the fearful discouragements that assailed me before I started from home! I have often thought of that season since; and have been satisfied that it was intended to show me, that I could do nothing of myself;—and that all the excellency of the power for every good work, is of God,—and not of me. My love to thyself and my precious children, as well as to all my friends and relations, who may inquire after thy poor wanderer.

EDWARD STABLER.

On returning his certificate to the monthly meeting, he solemnly remarked, that “the services which it authorized, had been performed to the relief and consolation of his mind.”

In the course of his travels in New Jersey, after attending a meeting which he had appointed among people of other societies, Edward Stabler was attacked by some persons, who appeared to be dissatisfied with his views on the subject of the Atonement, as not being enough outward. In this conference, Edward explained the subject to them so clearly, that they appeared to be generally well satisfied. He, however, on further consideration, thought it possible that some

of them might misrepresent his views on that subject, and the next day he wrote the following short essay on the doctrine of the Atonement; which he put into the hands of a Friend, to be used as occasions might require.

The Atonement.

The spiritual or religious *reality*, which is intended to be expressed by the term *Atonement*, is in my opinion vastly more comprehensive, than is generally apprehended by the professors of christainty. It implies the *means* and the *fact* of reconciliation between the creature and the Creator;—as is expressed in the prayer of the blessed Jesus, (John xvii. 21) “That they all may *be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may *be one* in us.” It consequently embraces every thing relative to *this union*; and includes redemption,—salvation,—and their necessary consequence, beatification.

If man *did not* commit sin, there would be no necessity for redemption. If he *could not* commit sin, there would be nothing to be saved from. And in a sinless, pure, and perfect state, he would necessarily be blessed. Sin therefore is the “partition wall” which separates between him and his Creator, and causes the difference between them; agreeably to that declaration of the prophet Isaiah, 59th chap. 2nd verse: “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.” *That power*, then, which removes this wall of partition, is the *atoning power*; and the state of the creature in

whom this momentous change has been accomplished, constitutes the *atonement*, as it regards him: because that which separated between him and his ever blessed Creator is done away,—and he is now *at one with Him*. The atoning power, therefore, is the same which *redeems* man from transgression, when he has fallen into it;—and *saves* him from falling, when he will obey it. It is Divine in its nature, because it is “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” And it cannot lose any thing of its divinity by being manifested in our flesh, for the gracious purpose of “blessing us, by turning every one of us from our iniquities,”—no more, than its divinity was impaired by taking upon it “the seed of Abraham,”—in the instance of the blessed Jesus.

This Christ, the power and wisdom of God, is omnipresent, eternal, and unchangeable; for these are inseparable from Divinity. He is not a person, (strictly speaking) as wisdom is not a person,—nor is power a person. But, both wisdom and power may be manifested in persons, making them *wise* and *powerful*;—as was the case in the holy Jesus.

Like the sun, the luminary of the outward world, Christ is alike present in all ages and times,—and with all persons and conditions;—and always operates in the same way upon the same states of being. His atoning, or reconciling operations are manifested in man,—the being to be reconciled: and he begins the process by “convincing him of sin.” He advances it, by convincing him “of righteousness.” He perfects it, by “redeeming him from all iniquity.” Wonderful

are the *fitness* and *sufficiency* of the means, by which these are accomplished. He contends against pride, by humility;—against cruelty, with mercy;—against folly, with wisdom;—against hatred, with love;—against revenge, with forgiveness, &c. &c. And as the powers of iniquity, which destroy the image of God in the human soul, are successively annihilated, the state of the creature becomes porportionally changed from “the image of the earthly,” to “the image of the heavenly;”—and he is translated “from darkness to light, and from the power of satan, to God.”

- There are many *words* and *theories* in relation to this subject, as well as about other things. But as it is self-evident, that we cannot be illuminated, nor nourished, by the words *light* and *food*, nor by any theories, false or true, concerning them;—so it is equally true, that in relation to the all-important circumstance of *reconciliation with God*,—the *heavenly operations* by which it is accomplished, and not words and theories about them,—constitute the true atonement: or, in other words, The Christian Religion.—For, as the illustrious Paul has said, “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” 1 Cor. iv. 20.

EDWARD STABLEE.

Under the influence of that love which was displayed in his whole conduct, he still frequently employed his leisure hours in writing to his correspondents.—The following letters contain a series of clear and eloquent remarks on the subject of religion.

Alexandria, 1829.

Truly, my dear cousin, those advocates for religion (in all ages) who have clothed her with *gloom* and *austerity*,—and have depicted her heavenly countenance as distorted with *frowns* and lowering with *severity*, have not only done the greatest injustice to her celestial nature, but, after the example of the Jews, (in relation to the most perfect example of her undivided influence, that ever was exhibited to human observation,) they have concealed her beauties by a “*scarlet robe*” of their own making, and putting on, and have crowned her *with thorns* of their own plating. The motive also appears to have been the same in both instances. The corruptness of human nature, while it is permitted to govern, is feelingly alive and tremblingly sensitive to the existence and progress of that pure “*power and wisdom*,” the whole nature of which is opposed to, and destructive of the *sovereignty of evil*.

The *Divine life*, (from which this pure wisdom and power are inseparable,) when manifested in human nature, always exhibits the same character,—does the same things,—and exhibits the same unchangeable “*holiness,—harmlessness,—and separation from every thing that is sinful.*” And blessed are they who are not offended at its purity, nor rebellious to its authority. But this purity and authority being in all their operations hostile to every principle of corruption, they who love corruption hate the life, because it bears irresistible evidence that “*their deeds are evil.*” These then are they who see Christ and religion (of which

he is the alone author) through a gloomy medium. To them he appears "as a tender plant,"—too tender to afford them protection;—and in their view "he has no form nor comeliness,—and no beauty that they should desire him." He teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;—and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But these are the things that they love, and are unwilling to part from. Notwithstanding, the demonstrations of fact and experience bear concurrent testimony, that all who are ungodly and obey the lusts of the world,—and live intemperately and unrighteously,—are as necessarily miserable, as that any other effect proceeds from its proper cause.

These then are the parents of that gloom, and dejection, and anxiety, with which so many of the professed teachers and other professors of christianity are too often clothed;—and with which they conceal the beauty of that Divine Truth which, if it were permitted to reign in their minds, would make them free from the bonds of corruption,—and from all the mistakes and distresses occasioned by it. But, alas! they fear "the cross of Christ;" which, my dear cousin, is not made of *wood*, but of those principles and powers by which the world is crucified to us, and we to the world: not the material world which is composed of earth, air, fire, and water;—for that stands in the Divine order, and is every particle of it good and perfect for the purposes intended by it;—but of that world which the apostle John spoke of, when he said, "All

that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," which are "not of the Father, but of the world."

I am, affectionately, thy kinsman,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 5th mo. 11th, 1829.

Perhaps there is not a more delightful office that is connected with social intercourse, than that of communicating to those we love a knowledge of those things by which they may be greatly benefited; nor is there any enjoyment derivable from the same source, more exquisite than to see *them* partakers of the good things to which their attention has been directed.

Both these enjoyments have been measurably mine, every time I have adverted to the interesting travel which I so recently was a partner in, with thy beloved parents, E. H., and thyself. I have not often known a greater plenitude of that precious influence, the native breathings of which are, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good-will toward men,"—than during that little journey. And the blessing is enhanced by the *certainty*, that no human energy could have commanded its presence,—nor no human wisdom directed its progress; but, "like the rain which cometh down, and the snow from heaven,—to water the earth, and cause it to bring forth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater,"—we were indebted for the benefaction to that gracious Being, who delights to exercise "loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth."

The truth of this view is, I think, demonstrated by our utter inability to give ourselves these seasons of light and enjoyment; for, if this were practicable, would we not always have them? Or would any of us be induced to suffer the "spirit of heaviness," when "the garments of praise" were within our reach?

But we are made partakers of the Divine bounty, as really as we are of the weaknesses and miseries of the flesh; and we are thereby practically instructed in the distinctive nature of each. And, whether we ever advert to the declaration of the apostle or not, our experience assures us, that "to be carnally-minded is death;" but "to be spiritually-minded, is life and peace." The wants and distresses of human nature are matters of experience, concerning which no rational mind can doubt, any more than it can question the reality of its own existence. And as the effects of these are always ungrateful and offensive, there is a universal effort to get free from them. And this is the origin of all the schemes for this purpose, which are practiced by the whole family of mankind.

The wants and distresses which appertain to the natural man, can be supplied and alleviated by natural means. These are the agents which are divinely appointed for these purposes; and we see that they are adequate to accomplish them. Our hunger is always remedied by food, and our thirst by drink;—our bodies are sheltered and protected from cold and tempest, by dwellings and clothing;—and all other natural agents accomplish the ends for which they were intended,

with equal perfection. But food will not satisfy the hunger of the soul, nor will water quench its thirst, nor wash away its defilements. No natural substance was ever qualified to minister to its peace, or to supply its necessities: but that same gracious Power which created, and gave natural things for natural purposes, has also given spiritual things for spiritual purposes. But alas! how many of us are deluded with the persuasion, that the former can accomplish the purposes of the latter;—and therefore practice and depend upon “meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,” to make us “perfect as pertaining to the conscience!” Nay, many do more weakly than this: they depend upon a *mere credence* of the historical fact, of what these things have done for the bodies of persons in past ages,—to do *that* for their souls, which they never did for the souls of any. At the same time, the bountiful and adorable Father of the universe, has never “left himself without a witness,” in the experience of every human being, not only that natural things cannot supply the wants of the soul, nor obviate its distresses,—but that he has also liberally and graciously given us access to the “corn of heaven;”—of which that food, and drink, and raiment, are made, that are as effectual to sustain, to satisfy, to protect, and to cherish it,—as the productions of the earth are to perform similar offices to the animal being. And these blessed things are as obvious to our discernment as the fruits of the earth. For we do know the principles of righteousness, goodness, and truth,—that they are not the fruits of the earth;—and that they are not

perceptible by the natural senses; and that their infallible effects are, to make us righteous, good, and true.

Why then, my dear friend, should any of us depend upon man, whose breath is in his nostrils?—or confide in the doctrines of his invention?—or bow to his authority, in relation to Divine things?—when it is self-evident, that none of the efforts of which he is capable, can save us from a sin, or imbue us with a virtue. Especially, when it is equally evident, that the Father of mercies, the God of all glory, has “opened the windows of heaven,” and has poured out the streams of righteousness, goodness, and truth, to wash away our sins,—to satisfy the hunger of our souls,—to quench their thirst,—and to supply all their wants,

Upon my return home, I found all my dear family well;—and the next day, our monthly meeting directed that I should be supplied with a minute, expressive of their concurrence with my prospect of visiting New York, New Jersey, &c.—and if nothing should occur to prevent, I expect to leave home on the afternoon of the 18th instant, and shall probably be in Philadelphia on the 21st. I should be much pleased if your house lay in my way,—in which case, I should rejoice to see you again, in order (as the Indians say) to brighten the chain of affection, by which my heart is bound to your beloved family. To all of them I wish to be affectionately remembered,—and to the kind friends of your neighbourhood: and be assured, my dear child, that thou art as much as ever beloved by thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 7th mo. 31st, 1829.

I sent thee a message, my dear A., by thy sister from New York, acknowledging myself thy debtor, and promising to make payment as soon and as well as I could. But the promise has been all that has been in my power, as I have been travelling from place to place ever since until the 23rd, when I was favoured to return to my dear family in good health. The same blessing had been dispensed to me during my whole journey; for I think I did not feel any thing that gratitude would allow me to call a *pain*, while I was absent from home for sixty-five days.

My visit has been a very interesting one indeed. The hearts of my dear friends were every where open to receive me. And though I was opposed in two instances, yet the efforts were so feeble and embarrassed, that they were without effect upon any but the opposers themselves. To them, indeed, they were a serious disadvantage; not only immediately, by the tendency of these *hostile tempers* to destroy the peace of their own minds, but also from the effects they had upon the multitude, before whom their disposition to injure (without the power) was so obviously manifested. The impression made upon my mind by their efforts, was compassion for them, on account of the mistaken course they were pursuing, which could only tend to their own distress and discomfiture.

But, my dear friend, all these things may be made instructive to us, by showing us the true nature of those realities, in which we are all so deeply interested. Observation and experience alike prove to us, that

independently of all *theories* and *dogmas*, *our minds* are *blessed*, or made *miserable*, by the tempers or affections which sway or govern them. And as these are permitted to proceed into *action*, they then produce *natural* and *moral* good, or evil; which severally *beatify* or *distress* the members of the human family, in their natural and moral relations. And I cannot see any applicable meaning, in the recorded experience and sentiments of the holy men of old, nor any utility from the perusal of their writings,—except that which refers to *these*, as the immediate causes of all righteousness and iniquity, and their successive consequences forever.

Thus, when the holy Jesus three times admonished his disciple Peter, “Feed my lambs;—feed my sheep;—feed my sheep;”—what did he mean? We do not find in scripture, nor any where else, that he ever *had* or *owned*, any of the *animals* here named. He must therefore have alluded to other things, of which these animals were adduced as a proper symbol. And *these* will be found in the *innocent*, *harmless*, and *gentle* affections, which distinguish the *lamb* from the *tiger* and the *wolf*. And, as every nature requires its appropriate food, to sustain its life, and promote its increase,—so the kinds of life which produce these tempers, are capable of being fed, and thereby of increasing and multiplying. Their food also is as different as their natures; for we know that the nutriment which sustains *innocence*, *meekness*, and *gentleness*, is as different from that which sustains *guilt*, *arrogance*, and *ferceness*,—as the food of the lamb, is different from that

of the tiger. This view, then, of the meaning of the admonition of Jesus, shows it to be of universal applicability, and universal interest. It therefore appears to me to constitute the only method by which true instruction can be derived from any part of the scriptures, whether preceptive or historical. For, when we read in them the true history of a good or a bad man, or people,—what appropriable instruction can be derived from such a history, but from the fact, that the same things which governed *them*, and made them *bad* or *good*,—will also, if they govern *us*, produce the same effects in us? And hence, the blessing pronounced by the holy Jesus upon “that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord had made ruler over *his household*, to give them their meat in due season.” The household of the Lord is composed of all the *holy tempers and affections*; and if we feed and nurture them, we shall find *the blessing*, in experiencing them to be “ministering spirits to minister for us, as heirs of salvation.”

I had many hopes of seeing thee and thy dear father when I was at Philadelphia and Bristol; but I suppose you did not hear of my being so near you. Had time admitted of my following the impulse of inclination, I should certainly have gone on purpose to see your family; but as it did not, I had to be contented with continuing to love you, without personal intercourse, as dearly as if I had been with you. My best love again salutes you all; and I hope the kindness and generosity of thy heart will not permit thee to imitate

my tardiness as a correspondent, but that thou wilt write soon to thy very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 18th, 1829.

Hundreds of times, my dear E., since my late interesting visit to my friends in New Jersey, have my recollections re-travelled the field of feeling and affection with them. And when my own mind is favoured, in any degree, with "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the (present) appearance of Jesus Christ,"—I then am sensible of a proportionate desire that all people may look to him to be instructed by his *wisdom*, and qualified by his *power*, to perceive and to pursue the path which leads to *present* and *eternal* peace.

My heart has often included thee and thy sister M. in the tender embraces of this desire. I have hoped that your innocent minds were not as yet shackled with the trammels of prejudice and superstition, nor enlisted as partisans in the *war of words and systems*, which has a tendency to divide and scatter, instead of collecting the children of men into one fold, and under the one blessed Shepherd. To such as you, I am satisfied the language of the Divine Saviour is always applicable; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And truly, though this invitation was uttered by Him through the medium of a "prepared body," yet his blessed being was not limited to that body; otherwise it would be impossible for any to come to

him but those who were present in Judea while he was there. The scriptures, on the contrary, declare in the clearest manner, his universality,—as “the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world,”—as the Creator of “all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers,”—as being “over all, God blessed forever,” and “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

Therefore it is undeniable, that all may come to Him, and find the declarations of scripture fulfilled in their experience,—by finding him to be indeed a Saviour, and a Redeemer from the numerous enemies which wound and captivate,—which torture and destroy so many of the sons and daughters of men.

Our own individual observation will abundantly assure us, that the awful artificers of all the miseries of the human family, are their own vehement and disordered passions. It is appalling, even to imagine the roaring of the lion, or the fierce and inexorable cruelty of the “wild beasts of the desert.” But it is comparatively easy to avoid these, and to defend ourselves from them; nor have they any thing of danger or terror in them, compared with similar tempers, when they actuate intelligent minds. In proof of this assertion, compare the devastations of avarice, pride, injustice, cruelty, &c., with all the desolation which has ever been produced by all the wild beasts and venomous serpents from the beginning of the world until now; and thou wilt perceive how small the latter has been

in comparison with the former. But these tremendous consequences are only the *outside works* of those unhal- lowed principles. Their effects in the *world of mind* are still more deplorable; for they destroy its peace, and defile its purity,—and deform its beauty,—and derange the heavenly symmetry of its powers.

And can it be rationally believed, that this discord can be prevented? or, when the chaos has in any measure taken place, that the wilderness can be again changed into an Eden,—or the desert into a “garden of the Lord,” by the feeble agency of human words and opinions,—of sectarian creeds or systems? No, my dear young friend. The fruitless experiment has been tried for ages, and by all generations in succes- sion! And it still remains unalterably true, that “the power of the Highest” must “overshadow” us,—the “Holy Spirit” must “come upon” us, in order to gene- rate in us that holy thing that is truly the Son of God; and who only has power in the soul to open its blind eyes,—to unstop its deaf ears,—to cleanse its leprosy,—to heal all its maladies,—to raise it from death unto life,—to preach the gospel to its poverty,— and to bless all those that “are not offended in him.” He only can work the miracle of making all things new;—“new heavens, and a new earth,” where righ- teousness shall dwell, instead of iniquity,—love, in- stead of hatred,—peace, instead of contention,—and everlasting joy, instead of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

It is a great calamity that there is so much teach- ing in the world, under the name of religion, that turns

the attention of mankind from the omnipresent "power and wisdom of God," to *another* thing which they call the gospel,—that is made up of their limited, grovelling views, in the feebleness and folly of men. Thousands are thereby induced to overlook, or disregard the infallible witnesses which he has mercifully placed in every human mind. For there is no intelligent creature to whom his good and perfect gifts have not been distributed. And as far as these have been occupied, they have as invariably produced their proper fruits as the seeds of the earth bring forth their fruits. For none of us are without an unquestionable assurance, that justice, mercy, and truth, will make all who are governed by them, just, merciful, and true,—as certainly as the apple tree produces apples, or the pear tree, pears.

Finally, then, my young friend, I commend thee to that blessed and heavenly birth, or manifestation of the Divine nature, which is the living Fountain from whence all the streams of righteousness have ever issued. He has loved thee, and given himself for thee, as thy Saviour and Redeemer; and if thou wilt take him for thy portion, he will liberate thee from the bondage of corruption, and give thee "beauty for ashes,—the oil of joy for mourning,—and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Please to present my affectionate remembrance to thy uncle and aunt, to thy sister, and to any friends who may inquire after thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

To Elizabeth Hunt, Darby, Pa.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 24th, 1829.

Thy father's letter, giving me intelligence of the peaceful close of our dear Ann, came duly to hand. The information was not unexpected; for when I was last with you, the probability that she would before long be released from the pains and troubles of time, seemed very apparent. I am fully persuaded that there is no cause to mourn for her; as I am satisfied that the gracious Being who created and preserved her innocent, has translated her gentle spirit to a state of being, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." That thy affectionate feelings should be deeply distressed by the event, is neither strange, nor improper. On the contrary, our holy Example pronounced a blessing upon those that mourn: and I think I am qualified by experience to say, that there is, in the tendering influences of mourning upon the human mind, a preparation wrought to receive more abundantly the impressions which produce present and everlasting comfort.

There are no earthly events which have so powerful a tendency to "remove the earth out of her place" in the soul's affections, as the loss of intimate and beloved friends: for, as they are the dearest of all earthly treasures, so they are precisely like ourselves: and we see that we are also liable to that which has occurred to them; and the love we have for them, brings the impression home to the feelings, and fixes it there. And as long as our love for their memory remains, so long is our attention turned, with proportionate cor-

rectness, to the seat of endeared recollections within ourselves. And though, like Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, we may go there to weep, yet that is the place where we find the blessed Saviour, the source and bestower of all consolation and comfort.

Is not mourning then crowned with comfort, when it leads to a discovery so blessed? I am not willing to doubt that it will have this desirable effect upon thy gentle spirit; and that thou wilt yet see that it has been "expedient" for thee that this outward object of thy love "should be taken away," in order that thou mightest become increasingly acquainted with that "Holy Spirit" which gave her all her loveliness, and will lead thee also into all truth; and become, even in thy own estimate, a treasure for which all other things are cheaply parted with.

It was consistent with the wisdom and goodness of my heavenly Father, to introduce my mind into the depth of sorrow, preparatory to my more intimate acquaintance with his *wisdom* and *power*, as spiritually manifested. The dearest object of my affections, my precious wife, was removed from me by death. She was my idol, at whose shrine all my warmest affections were devoted: and when she was taken from me, not only were my "heavens shaken," but "the earth also was removed out of her place;" and in the bitterness of my affliction, I was ready to conclude that a sentence of everlasting extinction was pronounced upon all my hopes of happiness. My state of mind was that of a wilderness, where none but doleful tempers and feelings had their habitations; and to these I was

a continual prey. These experiences have qualified me not only to sympathize with those who are under similar afflictions,—but twenty-three years of added experience have shown me, that though “he allures us into the wilderness,” it is for merciful purposes. He does not intend *that* for our permanent residence; but, after he has rendered us sensible of the frailty of all things *but himself*, and of the disorder and confusion which result from every other government *but his own*,—he begins the blessed work of the new creation, agreeably to his own declaration, “Behold, I make all things new.”

I am persuaded, my dear young friend, that thou wilt find this gracious promise realized in thy hereafter experience, if thou wilt not resist his operations, nor attempt to accomplish for thyself, and by means of thy own devising, a liberation from the wilderness condition. “Let patience have its full and perfect work.” “Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding,” and he will prepare thy way, by changing all that constitutes the wilderness, (a work which man of himself never did, nor ever can perform,) by “creating in thee a new heart, and renewing a right spirit within thee.” And as the blessed work will be performed *by him*, and not by thyself alone, nor any other being, *he* will become the *object* of thy love. And then thou wilt “come up from the wilderness, leaning upon thy Beloved,”—“fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible” to every thing that would hurt or annoy thee, “as an army with banners.” This is what my tenderest af-

fections desire for thee. Do not give thyself up to too much grief and dejection; but cultivate resignation to the will of thy heavenly Father.

The dear one who is gone, is doubtless better provided for than if she were here, with the sovereignty of the world and its pleasures at her command. And though thou art deprived of the comfort of her society, thou hast many benefits remaining; and above all, thou hast free access to that pure Fountain of *life* and *love*, which is manifested within thee; of which thou mayst drink as certainly as she does, and find it to be at once the baptizing element, and the river of the water of life, of which thy soul may drink, and live forever in the enjoyment of its precious influences.

Please to present my affectionate salutation to thy father, and all thy beloved relations, as if named. I cordially love them, and desire their individual prosperity as I do thy own, in the best things. Write to me soon, for thy letters are always acceptable to

Thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 30th, 1829.

So very pleasant have been my recollections of my visit to my beloved friends, that I have been, many times since parted with you, incited to inform you in this way, how dear you were to my best feelings: and I now think I ought not to put it off any longer. I consider it an exalted privilege, to be capable of feeling this "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:" and it

is scarcely less so, that there are so many precious ones in the world, who can be embraced as legitimate objects of the same endearing influence. My late visit to New Jersey made me acquainted with many of these, that I knew nothing of before; and of course, enlarged my circle of enjoyments, by multiplying the objects of that unselfish love which increases by expansion, and becomes more intense in proportion as it is extended.

The disciples of the blessed Jesus, when they became partakers of the heavenly spirit by which he was actuated in all he did, found that the selfish dispositions by which they had been previously governed, were changed by its pure influence, and no man said that any thing he had was his own, but "they had all things common." And such remains to be its liberal character, especially in respect to the good things belonging to its own nature and kingdom: and all who know it and are governed by it, become like-minded with it. To them it becomes a joy, when others partake of the same precious spirit which blesses them;—and they are disposed, with the prophet, to invite "every one that thirsteth to come to the waters;—and him that hath no money, to come and buy wine and milk without money and without price." For, as wine and milk are cordial and sustaining to the animal being,—so are the fruits of the Spirit, which consist in "all righteousness, goodness, and truth," alike invigorating and nutritious to the spiritual being. The Father of mercies is the giver of both;—but he has de-

signed them for specific purposes, which they answer most perfectly; but they never can be substituted for each other.

The soul has its hunger, as well as the body; and when it fasts, there is a temptation arising from its cravings, to make food of earthly things. "If thou be the son of God, command these stones to be made bread." But is it not written in the living volume of all human experience, that earthly things are as incapable of satisfying the hunger of the soul, as stones are of supplying the place of bread to the animal being? *There also* it is written, that "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, shall man live:"—not the "man that is born of woman, who hath but few days, and full of trouble;"—but the man who is a spiritual being, and is "the offspring of God." The *former* can feed upon the fruits of the earth;—they furnish his proper food;—they grow in the region of his existence;—and they "perish with the using." It is the *latter* only that can perceive or partake of "the fruits of the Spirit," and find in them his indispensable and appropriate sustenance. They proceed "out of the mouth of God." He alone is their author; and they constitute "the bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world." These are the *viands* that do not perish with the using; for *love* increases, when we feed upon it; and so does joy, and peace, and gentleness, and goodness, and truth, &c. The region in man, where these celestial fruits are planted, and known, and may be cultivated, is indeed an "Eden" of *Divine formation*. There only can we

find our proper good, and the preventives and remedies of all evil.

But alas! for poor human nature! From the beginning, through all its posterity, (in greater or less degrees,) it falls by the power of temptation. Its spiritual hunger requires and solicits food; and it yields to the impulse to substitute "stones" for "bread." It is indued with native aspirations for "glory and honour," its true *crown* and *diadem*: but the kingdoms of this world, with their imperfect and fugitive glories, are presented in fascinating prospective to its view;—and it bows in homage and service to the powers by which only they can be obtained. But still it remains anxious and unsatisfied;—and then it *invents a religion*, and constructs a temple, which is formed of materials that are dug out of the earth, or grow upon its surface. It hews, and squares, and arranges them by its natural powers and wisdom:—and to ascend to its "pinnacle," or highest point, is a natural ambition, for which all its preceding steps have prepared the way, and furnished the inducements. And when this is attained, it too often has happened, that *man*, inflated with his pre-eminence, and confiding in his supposed security, has obeyed the temptation to "cast himself down;"—and the rocks of *pride, luxury, avarice, cruelty, intemperance, &c. &c.* have received him in his awful *fall* into the region of corruption!

From these deplorable consequences, it is evident he might have been *saved* by obeying the suggestions or monitions of that holy and pure *Life* which created him at first, and whose inspirations are *humility, tem-*

perance, liberality, *mercy*, &c. &c. Because a co-existence of these with the principles of corruption, is as impossible as concord between light and darkness, or any other opposites. And the *same* which could have *saved him from falling*, is obviously *that alone* by which he can be *redeemed from* (or out of) *the fall*, when it has taken place.

In this view, all is *comprehensible*, and all is *adequate*. But what poor and feeble substitutes for this efficient *religion of life and power*, are the dry and lifeless systems of human invention, where creeds, doctrines, professions, and opinions, are the only weapons which are furnished to contend against "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places," which are the sole "rulers of the darkness of this world!" But, copious and interesting as the subject is, I must cease, or not have room to say how glad I should be to hear from you. My best love salutes you all,—and I am, with truth and sincerity, your friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 10th mo. 16th, 1829.

A letter with thy signature, my dear Elizabeth, will always be acceptable to a friend who feels as affectionately attached to thee as I do;—and I am gratified at the evidence thou hast given me of thy friendship and confidence.

In the present state of the professing religious world, it is emphatically a time of "wars and rumours of wars." For, great are the conflicts of passion and

opinion,—“the sea and the waves roaring, and men’s hearts failing them for fear,” lest their systems and views, to which they have attached the character of sacredness, should fall into ruin and destruction, amid the tumult of *wind* opposing *wind*, and *wave* dashing against *wave*. But it is still the counsel of Infinite Goodness to them who have chosen to follow him, rather than the windy *professions*, the passionate *heats*, and the *quakings* of earthly views and interests,—“See that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass.” “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;” each one opposing all others;—not that the kingdom of God and *his Christ* may be established, but that their own supremacy may prevail, and all others be subjected to their authority. For every party is proclaiming, “Lo! here is Christ, *among us*: and as Christ is the only Saviour, if you come not with us, you cannot be saved.”

But, my dear child, “believe them not:” for, like “the lightning which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west,”—Christ is only seen or known by *his own light*: and all who truly perceive him, behold him coming in the “bright clouds of heaven,”—“with power and great glory:” not in the dark clouds which float (visible to the natural eye) in the gross atmosphere of this world, which the eyes of birds and beasts, and creeping things can behold also. “And he shall send *his angels*,” (not the messengers of man’s devising,) “and shall gather together *his elect*” (not those which man shall choose,) “*from the four winds,—from the uttermost part of the earth, to*

the uttermost part of *heaven*." And this blessed office has always been *his*, and *his alone*; and he has always employed the same "ministering spirits,"—the same "angels;" for he is *unchangeable*:—and these ministering angels are the "fruits of the Spirit." "Love" gathers us into the fold of affection; and "joy" delivers us from sorrow;—and "peace" surrounds us with tranquillity; and "gentleness" makes us gentle; and "goodness" makes us good, &c. &c. And by "all these worketh *one* and the *self-same Spirit*, dividing unto every man severally as he will."

Dost thou not know the truth of these things?—Therefore, let not thy "heart be troubled" at the wars and rumours of wars. "Thou believest in God;" believe also in *this birth* of his "*power and wisdom*," which is his "Christ within, the hope of glory,"—and "the *true light* that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." If thy attention be exclusively turned to the roaring of the sea, and to the magnitude of the waves, which have been thrown into tumult by the fierce winds of party spirit, and the oppositions of opinion,—nothing but *fear*, and an apprehension of *perishing*, can be afforded by such a view. But if thou wilt turn to this holy birth of the Divine nature, manifested within thee, all these disquieting and terrifying commotions will be rebuked by him. *Peace* will succeed to *tempest*; and a *heavenly calm*, to the roaring of the sea, and the destructive concussions of the waves.

Our present experience of the effects of these *realities*, gives us the strongest possible assurance of their

unchangeable influences upon the souls of the children of men. And let it never be forgotten, that *the same souls* that now inhabit a body of flesh and blood, *in time*,—will be the inhabitants of *eternity*. And as *good* and *evil* produce their distinctive effects *now*;—the *first* ennobling, exalting, and blessing the soul;—the *second* defiling, degrading, and tormenting it;—such will be their relative influences *forever*.

I am entirely satisfied, that no system of man can alter the natures of good and evil, any more than different systems of philosophy can change the established order of the Universe. I know, and all mankind know it also, that “the work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.” The opposite is therefore necessarily true: the work of wickedness is inquietude, and the effect of wickedness, distress and confusion forever. No fatuity, nor delusion, therefore, can be greater than to forsake “the Fountain of living waters,” from which all the streams of righteousness have ever flowed, and still flow;—and to employ all our immortal energies in forming creeds and systems,—when all men experience and know that they are, at best, “broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

The cordial salutations of my dear family are presented to thee, in return for thy message of love to them; and with best wishes for thy present and everlasting welfare, I am, truly and sincerely, thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 12th, 1839.

It is not necessary, my dear friend, to tell thee that thy letters always give me pleasure, Independently of the intelligence which they convey, and which is in itself an interesting object,—the marks of warm affection, among the most estimable of all the features of the human character,—are to me particularly valuable. I admire *intelligence*, but I love *affection*. The most perfect state of humanity subsists in those cases where both are united by an inseparable marriage, evidently of Divine appointment,—and never dissolved, nor deranged, but to the unspeakable disadvantage of the household over which they were intended to preside. If there be any one instance in which the precept, “What God hath joined, let no man put asunder,”—is of the utmost consequence to be obeyed, *it is this*. For, as Young has said, “With the talents of an angel, a man may be a fool:” and how many lamentable instances have the history and observation of man exhibited, where the intellectual powers of the mind have been exclusively cultivated, and its affections permitted to run wild,—producing *monsters*, abounding in intelligence, but divested of goodness. Such cannot be objects of attachment, nor can they enjoy or confer happiness. Like the volcano, they are bright, but destructive. They shine,—but their light is the harbinger of desolation.

On the contrary,—the history of ignorance, however it may abound in affection, is not much less lovely than the former: though it must be admitted that it is not so terribly hateful. But where the two

subsist in due proportion, they constitute the most lovely of all objects, and produce the largest measure of happiness in all relations. To maintain them in this order, and to re-call, and re-arrange them, when they have wandered, or become disordered, is among the noblest employments of an intelligent and affectionate being. And for this purpose, he stands in need of the wisdom and power of the Divine nature, to be manifested in him. For it is not less true, that the wisdom and power of the Deity are alone capable of maintaining the harmony of his creation, than that they were the only adequate agents in its original formation.

The lovely family at P. are a sample of the union of intelligence with pure affections. I received a letter from them at the time of our Yearly Meeting; and it was a rich and munificent reward for one that my affections had dictated and sent to them. I have seldom paid a visit which gave me more satisfaction than my visit there. They all seemed to dwell in an atmosphere where my spirit could breathe without obstruction or difficulty. I was prepared to expect a mental feast, from some previous acquaintance; but the reality surpassed the anticipation.

After our Yearly Meeting, we were highly gratified by bringing home with us a precious company of visitors. They stayed with us from seventh-day to the following fifth-day. It is a favour of no common magnitude to have such friends; and to enjoy a sweet, social intercourse with them, is among the most exquisite enjoyments in life. And when we look at the

causes which make them so precious, is it not self-evident, that the right order and due arrangement of the two great families of *intellect* and *affection*, governed and harmonized by Divine wisdom and goodness, give them all their charms?

With due remembrance of my kind friends in your neighbourhood, I am sincerely thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 18th, 1839.

I have received a munificent compensation, for my feeble effort to express to my dear friends the tender affection I felt for them, by the reception, when in Baltimore, of their mutual letter of 10th month 17th. My heart did not deceive me; when it testified in your society, *These* dwell in the region of love and gentleness;—and here my spirit has found an atmosphere in which it can breathe without difficulty or obstruction. It is clear, even to self-evidence, that such a mental atmosphere may, and does exist;—and that it constitutes “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:”—and of which, the most fragrant and salubrious atmosphere of the material world, is but a low and transient figure.

But there is an unity of spirit, without the bond of peace. It was exemplified in the instance of *Pilate* and *Herod*, when they united in a determination to condemn the holy Jesus. Its constituents are admirably described by the prophet, in the desolated state of Babylon:—“The wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses; and dragons in their pleasant

palaces." For where the human mind becomes the house or habitation of such *tempers* and *propensities* as naturally characterize the "wild beasts" and "dragons," (and these were the actual causes of the ruin of Babylon, once "the glory of kingdoms,") though there may be unity of spirit, the objects effected by it must be desolation;—and never were, nor never can be "peace,—nor quietness,—nor assurance forever." But, "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" No beastly temper,—no dragon-like propensity deforms or defiles his heavenly Being: but he is the omnipresent and living Fountain of "righteousness, goodness, and truth;" "and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." For the presence of every measure of these blessed realities, we are as certainly indebted to his manifestation in us, as we are to his creating power for our existence. And never, never has any human soul received the celestial visitant, and permitted him to diffuse the streams of his righteousness and goodness through it,—but who has found the animating picture of the inspired apostle realized in its experience: "He showed me a pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the *throne* of God, and of the Lamb." A throne is the emblem of sovereignty, because it is the seat of a king:—and in proportion as the Divine government prevails in every soul, there the lamb-like nature is in dominion;—and every thing that proceeds from it is "pure,—peaceable,—gentle, and easy to be intreated,—full of mercy and of good fruits,—without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Truly, my beloved friends, there is nothing that you have ever known, that is more certain than these blessed realities. You have seen this heavenly Sovereign; and He it is who has conversed with you, since your earliest recollection. But his voice is without sound;—it is *still*;—it is *small*; yet it is *ineffable*, and *full of wisdom*. You know that the voice of *love* is *without noise*,—but how clear are its impressions! how indubitable the evidences of its nature, and its requisitions! It is the same with all the language of heaven, and with all the words which Christ speaks to our souls. They are all spirit, and they are all vital:—as definite and unequivocal as the impressions of *love*; and like *that*, they stamp their true image upon the mind, and cannot be misunderstood. In this spiritual and living language, the *mysteries* of godliness are *revealed*;—the fruits of the Spirit are produced;—and the mind comes to perceive, with absolute certainty, that “the kingdom of God is not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth,—*but in power*.” It is the power of love, to make us affectionate;—of joy, to make us joyful;—of peace, to make us peaceable;—of gentleness, to make us gentle;—of goodness, to make us good, &c. &c.

These are the elementary principles,—the A, B, C, of the christian religion. And so far from being “an unpleasant task,”—it is a delightful employment to teach the precious children to know them,—and to show them the combination of *these letters* into syllables, and words, and sentences,—until they become learned in the literature of heaven, and made “wise

unto salvation." And, to change the metaphor to suit thy taste, my dear A. W., these are the *plants* of our heavenly Father's planting. They are capable of cultivation, and will bloom with immortal beauty. They are nourished by the "pure river of the water of life, and yield their fruits every month; and their leaves are for the healing of the nations."

To my dear friend and brother and his precious wife, I can say with cordial sincerity, that your salutation and affectionate remembrance were very acceptable. And what can I tender you in return, but the assurance of reciprocal feelings, with my best wishes that all things may work together for the present and everlasting good of yourselves and all the members of your household.

I much regret that my constant engagements, during our Yearly Meeting, did not admit of time to find out your young friends. I was appointed assistant-clerk, and upon several committees;—the several duties of which, left me scarcely any leisure. We had a very interesting and satisfactory Yearly Meeting. Taking it altogether, it was perhaps the most so of any I ever attended. I have been present at several, when the *tide of life* arose as high, if not higher, in particular sittings: but to witness an assembly of six or seven hundred men,—all of whom knew they had the privilege of speaking,—and subjects of great interest deliberated upon, and concluded,—and not one jar, nor one discordant action or expression to occur from first to last,—was indeed a most grateful phenomenon; that I do not remember ever before to have witnessed. I

hope our hearts were filled with gratitude for the favour; as mine is with affection, in subscribing myself your sincere friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 6th, 1830.

Letters from our absent friends, like visits from their persons, are always acceptable. They both have a direct tendency to awaken and refresh those gentle and tender affections, whose nature is to bless the mind in which they dwell, and to prompt it to use all its efforts to extend its own blessings, by promoting the bliss of others. Thy affectionate letter of 13th ult., produced a measure of these effects upon me. It revived the recollection of your kindness and fellow-feeling with the poor exercised traveller. And I, moreover, rejoiced in the evidences it afforded, that in thee I had a sister-spirit; alike desirous that the members of the human family might become acquainted with "the Truth as it is in Jesus,—and be thereby freed from the many things which destroy their peace. All men are desirous to witness this relief,—because, to all men distress and affliction are grievous. But many give their money for those things which are "not bread,"—and "their labour for that which satisfieth not." The world and its glories are set before them in fascinating array;—they think that these will give the bliss they are hungering for;—they try them, and are disappointed; but still pursue the same delusive course.

The appetites and necessities of our animal nature are clamorous for gratification;—and it is right that

they should be reasonably satisfied; "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." But when the soul degrades herself by making *these* her treasures, then *she* "falls from heaven to earth," and finds her desires a "bottomless pit" that never can be filled with things of this kind. How obvious then is the benevolence and wisdom of that counsel: "Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof." But in relation to *this kingdom*, there exists a deplorable degree of misconception among the children of men. In vain have the scriptures testified from the highest authority, that "the kingdom of heaven is within us,"—that it consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." In vain does the experience of all intelligent beings continually bear witness, that these are *realities*, and may be *known*,—and *sought after*,—and attained; and that when attained, "the work of righteousness is always *peace*,—and the effect of it, quietness and *assurance* forever." For, in opposition to all this weight of evidence, it appears as if few were disposed to seek for it *there*;—or to call upon that Life, in which "they live, and move, and have their being,"—and that is always ready to bless and to save them. But, on the contrary, they are looking *outward*, and to *futurity* only; not considering that in *futurity*, as well as at the *present*, the righteous only can be blessed;—and there never can be any peace to the wicked, neither in time nor eternity.

The whole tenor of human experience confirms this truth. A sick man cannot know the feelings of health until disease is removed, with its anguish and pains.

Hunger can only be obviated by food, and darkness removed by light, &c. In like manner, (and equally certain by experience,) the powers of evil, being unchangeable in their nature, must always act as disease, hunger, and darkness do; they must produce misery and affliction forever. But when they are cast out of the soul by the powers of righteousness, these also are alike unchangeable in their nature, and their influences produce "peace, joy, and holiness of spirit" forever. How much it is to be lamented, my dear M., that this *field* of living facts and certainties is so heedlessly overlooked by our fellow-creatures; and that, instead of labouring *in it*, where they might be continually "receiving wages, and gathering fruit unto life eternal,"—they turn their attention to the "winds of doctrines," and to unprofitable speculations, which leave their minds as much a prey to all sorts of evil, as if they made no profession of religion at all.

I rejoice in believing that thy mind has long since been convinced that the "kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;"—and that thou hast found its truth and certainty, in the power of innocence to make thee innocent;—of love, to make thee affectionate;—of kindness, to make thee kind;—and of gentleness to make thee gentle, &c. And my best affections commend thee to that precious foundation of Eternal Power from which all these proceed; and, in the language of the apostle, "*that* whereunto thou hast already attained, walk by the same rule, mind the same thing;"—and there cannot be one shadow of doubt, that thou

wilt thereby be made like the "King's daughter,—all glorious within."

My affectionate remembrance is presented to thy father and mother, and to Friends in your place. I often think of you all, with much earnestness of desire, that in the present day of conflict and trial, you may not suffer any "root of bitterness" to spring up in your hearts to trouble you; for where the "gall of bitterness" subsists, there also is "the bond of iniquity," and its cause. Farewell. It will be very grateful to me, to be remembered by thee in the covenant of christian fellowship;—and any communications from thy pen will be always acceptable to thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 11th, 1830.

I am persuaded that the minds of all the human family are so constituted by our heavenly Father, that they are all disposed to goodness; and every person who becomes unrighteous, does it by resisting the native impulses of the soul,—or by permitting them to become degraded by a pursuit of objects, the attainment of which requires the sacrifice of those exalted and beatific feelings which constitute at once the glory and happiness of existence. For such is really the situation of all those who exchange the principles which keep them *innocent*, for any gratification that they cannot possess without becoming *guilty*. For every thing that is known or knowable, acts according to its *own nature*, both in heaven and in earth. And

it is as unreasonable, and contrary to truth and experience, to expect the blessings of righteousness from the influences of any evil principle or action,—as to expect coldness from fire, or dryness from the effusion of water.

The inspired writers, speaking of the unvarying natures and influences of good and evil, use the term *forever*, which means *always* or *continually*. Thus, we find the psalmist, speaking of Divine mercy, says, “his mercy endureth forever;”—that is, it is always the same, and acts in the same way. The apostle John, speaking of the powers of evil in their influences upon those who are actuated by them, describes them by saying, “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest *day nor night*, who worship the beast and his image.” Thou wilt perceive by the meaning of the compound word *forever*, that the influences of these things cannot be limited (as many suppose they are) to eternity, nor to time,—but are unchangeable, the same in both—that is, the principles of good and evil as they exist in the mind, (their only residence, as it regards human beings,) always act according to their nature; the good producing goodness, both in principle and action,—now and hereafter,—by day and by night,—in earth and in heaven;—and evil likewise bringing forth its own fruits perpetually.

We are all at school in our present state of existence; and are continually learning the most important truths, in becoming acquainted with the invariable nature and effects of principles and powers. Our

heavenly Father hath placed us here for that very purpose; and he has given to each of us a measure of "his good Spirit" to instruct us. He makes use of the realities of experience as mediums of education; and we cannot possibly be deceived, as long as our attention does not wander from these, and the knowledge they infallibly impart.

Thy mind has long been conversant with those things which have made an Eden to thee, of the same kind of existence which has been a wilderness to many others, by reason of the tempers and propensities of wild beasts and venomous serpents, which they have consented should rule over them. Thou hast also known what it is to be tempted, as they have been. And the "good and perfect gifts," which the Father of mercies has bestowed upon all, have been obeyed by thee, and have saved thee from their bitter experience. Fear not then to surrender thyself entirely to the same precious government; let the angels of thy Lord keep thee in their hands; and all the confederated influences of earth and evil shall never prevail against thee.

With affectionate regard, I remain thy friend;

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 17th, 1830.

DEAR FRIEND,—

Thy letter of 12th month 28th is at hand; and I am disposed to comply with thy request, in furnishing thee with some of my views upon the subjects to which it refers;—after premising, that I should very much

regret to contribute in any degree to establishing in thy mind a persuasion that *my* opinions, or those of any other person, can be of any real importance, in relation to times and circumstances so remote as the history and opinions of the ancient Jews; except in so far as they illustrate the operations of the *principles* and *powers* which produce good and evil in human nature; and consequently render mankind happy or miserable, as they are governed by the one or the other. These are the really important points to us all; and every thing else dwindles into insignificance in comparison with them.

When the holy Jesus stated the sublime *reality* of the Divine character, he appealed to a *fact* in creation which has always been as conspicuous as it is now, and always the same: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy friend, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies: bless them that curse you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; *that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.*" Such is the immutable nature of the Sovereign of the Universe: but it is not so with man, (nor with any man.) He is changeable; "he cometh forth as the flower, and is cut down; he fleeth as the shadow, and continueth not." The beginning of his career is in ignorance and weakness; and the estimates which he forms of all things, are modified by his own state or condition.

“When I was a child,” said the illustrious Paul, “I thought as a child,—I spake as a child,—I understood as a child.” The same things are alike true of every member of the human family.

When therefore we notice the great discrepancies in human character, and sentiment, and conduct, in the different stages of existence, and knowledge, and virtue—(especially as it regards his apprehensions of Divine requisitions) would it be reasonable or just to ascribe these mutations to changes or fluctuations in the Deity, rather than to the changeable nature of the creature? No: I think right reason will compel us to say with the apostle, “*Let God be true, and every man a liar.*” That men, under the influence of ignorance, prejudice, or vitiated affections, may, and do come to believe that they ought to do things totally repugnant to the Divine will, is abundantly declared in history, and manifested to daily observation. The eminent Paul declared before Agrippa, that he *verily thought* he ought to do many things against, or contrary to the name of Jesus Christ. And Jesus himself testified to his disciples, “the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you *will think* that he doeth God service.” “And these things will they do unto you, *because they have not known the Father, nor me.*” And the martyr Stephen includes both the ancient Jews and those who were co-eyal with himself, in one general reprehension: “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.*”

The ancient Jews, being men of like passions with other men, were thereby rendered liable to perverted views of the *Divine nature*,—as well as the present members of the human family. The same sublime and unalterable evidences of immutable goodness, wisdom, and kindness, being, and having been alike conspicuous to all, even in the economy of the outward creation; yet we perceive that *this fact* has not prevented either ancients or moderns from believing, that wars and bloodshed were consistent with the will of God. On the contrary, it has been a common occurrence in all ages, for whole nations to ascribe the success of their ferocious and desolating conflicts to the *favour and assistance* of the God of love. Even professors of the religion of Christ, with the history of his pure, gentle, benevolent, and peaceable life (when manifested in the person of the blessed Jesus) before them,—have exhibited the same dispositions, as prominently as Jews, Mahometans or Pagans. Need it then be a thing incredible to any, that ancient as well as modern historians (being men) might in like manner be mistaken, when they admitted the persuasion that the Deity commanded people to destroy their fellow-creatures, and that he “fought for them?” The God of mercy gave to them who were able to receive it, the same evidences of his true character that he does to us;—and before Moses especially, he “proclaimed himself,” in the most solemn and impressive manner, “the Lord, the Lord God,—*merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.*”—

Now, can the rational understanding of any man consistently ascribe to any of these qualities, a disposition to command the banishment of all mercy from the human heart, and to inflict indiscriminate destruction upon *men, women and children?*

In the forepart of his life, the patriarch Abraham was also a warrior; and from the testimonies given to his integrity, there can be no doubt that he *thought* he had the Divine sanction to slaughter the kings who had desolated the land in which his relation Lot resided, and taken him captive. But upon his return from that expedition, he was met by Melchizedek, "*king of peace*—priest of the most high God," who, actuated by "the power of an endless life," and not by the "law of a carnal commandment," blessed Abraham (not in a form of words, but) by instructing his understanding in the nature of "the gospel, which is the power of God unto *salvation*," (not destruction) by which "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith:" and from that time, *Abraham was a warrior no more*. And then it was that he occupied the condition which was afterward commemorated by the holy Jesus: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and *he saw it and was glad*."

And truly the voice of fact proclaims to all ages and times, that the victims of those tempers and dispositions, without which war is impossible, are necessarily miserable from the very nature of things;—while the subjects of the "wisdom that is from above," and is "*pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full*

of mercy, and of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy,”—are thereby filled with “joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away.”

I am affectionately thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 22nd, 1830.

My beloved Caroline does not need a verbal assurance to convince her that her letter from B. was truly acceptable. The feelings of her own affectionate heart, upon similar occasions, will furnish a rule of decision which cannot deceive her. We heard of thy indisposition, my dear C., through several channels, and many times wished that it was our privilege to visit thy sick couch; but as circumstances were, we could do no more than sympathize with thee, and cultivate the affectionate wish, that thou mightest soon be well enough to assure us of thy recovery with thy own hand.

It is surely among our greatest social privileges, that we may know and partake of spiritual or mental communion, in as great reality as we can of personal. Our souls are sensitive, as well as our bodies; and why may not their perceptions and intercourse be as vivid, and unquestionable? Doubtless they are so; and all mankind are witnesses of this important fact; a fact which establishes the position so clearly to the christian, that it is not only true that we may have “fellowship one with another, but also with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.” Nor do I know of any impediment to an universal proficiency in the know-

ledge of this,—as great, and as certain as our knowledge of natural truth,—but the interposing fascinations of “the kingdoms of this world, and the glories of them.” These are the first objects that receive the attentions of human beings. They minister to the necessities and gratification of our terrestrial nature; and we become distinctly enamoured of *the things* which are severally presented through the mediums of the *five* animal senses. Love leads to marriage; and they ultimately become the *five husbands* to which the soul is united.

But, my dear child, He who is “the chiefest among ten thousand,” and lovelier than any of the children of this world,—does not fail to present himself, with infinite kindness, *to thee*, to me, and to all our brethren and sisters,—as he did to the woman of Samaria; and he declares to us, as he did to her, “all that ever we did;” showing us at the same time, that nothing of a terrestrial nature can satisfy the thirst of our immortal spirits; and offering us the “living water, that shall be *in us* a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” And truly, its precious streams are conspicuous:—they consist of the principles of righteousness;—to *drink* of them *will quench* the *thirst* of the soul,—to *wash* in them will cleanse it from every defilement. And every *vital power* that is sustained by their nurture, becomes a “tree of life which yieldeth its fruits every month,” or continually.

Thy mind has often tested the truth of this representation; for “thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.” And so far as this has been realized in thy

experience, the natural and necessary effect of such a state of thy affections has been produced;—and “God, even thy God, has anointed thee (thereby) with the oil of gladness, above any of thy fellows” whose wandering attachments had connected them to different objects. That thou shouldst also have been tempted in the same way, is not extraordinary, nor unprofitable. Our blessed Example “was in all points tempted, like as we are;” and it is an experience which is common to man. It is profitable, because we not only become thereby acquainted with our enemies, but with the *Holy Spirit* and *Power* which saves and redeems us; and under whose Divine patronage, “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.”

Thy little friend C. is in good health, as sprightly as a roe upon the mountains, and as intelligent as any creature of her age that I have ever known. When her years shall admit the possibility of making the impression, I will endeavour to render thy name as dear to her as thou canst wish.

With sincere affection, I remain thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 27th, 1830.

We all considered it a favor, my dear young friend, to have thy father's acceptable company and religious services among us; and my family and myself had cause to esteem it an especial gratification, that he

made his home with us. But the estimate which is formed of the value or importance of public religious opportunities, is so low that, in our cities particularly, if they are appointed to be held in hours of business, the people will not leave their trades and merchandise to attend them. Had thy father's prospects admitted of his appointing evening meetings, hundreds would probably have attended, where tens only attended the *day meetings*. I suspect the cause of this will be found in the force of custom and usage. The greater part of religious professors have none but evening meetings, except on first-days;—they become of course reluctant to conform to any other regulation, especially if it is to be done at pecuniary sacrifices. There is, however, a consolatory thought which presents itself, in connection with this subject:—the Father of mercies is omnipresent, and seeks those who will not seek him; and makes himself known to them that ask not for him. And it was not *peculiar* to the first disciples, to be called while they were engaged in their secular employments, to follow the “manifestation of God in the flesh;” they were instances only of an universal dispensation to all the members of the human family. Of this we are all made sensible; “when we turn to the right hand, or when we turn to the left,” from the path of innocence and rectitude, by the “still small voice” that impresses the mind without noise; but with irresistible power; showing not only the wrong way into which we have turned—but clearly demonstrating the *right one*;—saying, “This is the way, walk in it.”

My heart is fully prepared to acknowledge the great benefit of religious assemblies. But I feel for those to whom they are wearisome; because they have in times past been so to me, especially when they were silent. The mind, in inexperienced life, is situated as Zaccheus was, in relation to the blessed Jesus. He was desirous to see him, "but could not for the press, because he was little of stature." In like manner, there are to us many *tall* interposing presentations, while our spiritual stature is small, that prevent us from perceiving the Divine manifestation. And I can recollect with certainty, that many times in my youth, when I have gone to meeting, I have been anxiously desirous to meet with that consolation and instruction of which I had heard and read; but, upon inward inspection, I could only see a multitude of other things, over which I was not as yet capable of seeing. But I have since perceived with clearness, that there is a *mean* of ascending above these, as efficient for us as the sycamore tree was for Zaccheus. And the same unchangeable mercy and goodness which created the tree, affords to us his "good and perfect gifts," of which, if we avail ourselves, we shall indubitably arise above those obstructions which prevent us from discerning our greatest good. They are mentioned by the apostle James in beautiful contrast with things of an opposite character, in the qualities of the wisdom which is from above, that "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated,—full of mercy and of good fruits—without partiality, and without hy-

pocrisy." Each of these is calculated to elevate us higher and higher, above the qualities of "the wisdom which is from beneath;" and these latter qualities constitute "the press" which hides from our discovery the glorious manifestation of Christ within us,—at once the *hope* and the *cause* of glory.

I hope our young friend C. has arrived at her pleasant home, with the comfortable experience of increased convalescence. She is a precious child; and I entertain no doubt that it will be well with her, whether she remain an inhabitant of time, or become a resident of eternity. My best love salutes thy father and mother, brothers and sister, J. T. and wife, M. P. and family, and the young woman whom I saw with thee at J. W's. last fourth month; my affections have been attracted to her every time I have seen or thought of her. C. P., his wife and sister, are also affectionately remembered.

I write under the pressure of a severe head-ache (rheumatism I suppose) of many days continuance. I hope it will furnish some excuse for so poor a letter to my young friend, from her very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 31st, 1830.

What shall I say in reply to the affectionate testimonies of regard, which have been so liberally bestowed by thy father and mother, and thyself, upon thy friend, who has nothing of his own that he can deem of equal value, to give you in return? That I

cordially love you, is indeed true: every feeling of my heart affirms it, and prompts me to acknowledge with gratitude, the favour of *your* precious love.

The legible record of *infirmity* and *helplessness*, which I am compelled to peruse daily in the book of my own life, makes it impossible for me to believe that I occupy such an exalted station as thy partiality has assigned me. But my deficiencies are calculated to awaken my spirit to vigilance, that I may perceive when "the Son of man cometh in the glory of his Father, and with the holy angels,"—to gather the wandering powers and affections of my mind "*from the four winds,—from the uttermost parts of earth, to the uttermost parts of heaven.*" This is the unspeakably gracious purpose for which he comes into the world; and all human nature is made a mother to him, (and this is the reason why he is called the Son of man,) but God alone is his Father. His holy angels, or "ministering spirits," are the principles and powers of righteousness, by which man is redeemed and saved from "all that is in the world;—the lusts of the flesh,—the lusts of the eye,—and the pride of life;"—whether they come from the north, south, east, or west. And in proportion as our souls are thus redeemed or saved, we are brought to the "uttermost parts of heaven;" which, as the apostle says, "is righteousness, peace, and joy."

I am fully persuaded that the minds of all the human family are so formed by the Father of mercies, that they are all disposed to goodness. And every person who becomes unrighteous, does so by resisting

the native impulses of the soul, or by permitting them to become degraded by a pursuit of objects, the attainment of which requires the sacrifice of those exalted feelings which constitute the glory and beatitude of existence. Such is really the condition of all those who exchange the principles which keep them *innocent*, for any gratification that they cannot obtain without becoming *guilty*. For every thing in heaven and in earth, *acts* and *works* according to its own nature. We know that fire *heats*, and water *moistens*,—unchangeably and perpetually: and it is equally certain that the “work of righteousness is peace, quietness, and assurance forever.”

The meaning of the word *forever*, seems to have been strangely misapprehended by many. From the way in which they use it, they seem to suppose that it applies only to that portion of existence which succeeds the death of the body: whereas its true meaning relates as fully to *time*, as it does to *eternity*; for it implies *always*,—*continually*,—*unremittedly*, &c.—When the psalmist, for instance, declares that “the mercy of God endureth forever,” we cannot rationally attach any other meaning to his words, than its universality and perpetuity. And the apostle John, speaking of the influences of evil upon those who are actuated by it, states (in conformity to universal experience) that “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and *they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image.*”

We are all *at school*, in our present state of existence;—and are learning continually the most impor-

tant truths, in becoming acquainted with the invariable nature and effects of *principles* and *powers*. Our heavenly Father has placed us here for that very purpose; and has given to each of us a measure of his own "good Spirit" to direct us. He makes use of the realities of experience, as agents in our education: and we cannot possibly be deceived, so long as our attention is not permitted to wander from their instruction, and the infallible knowledge they impart. Thy mind has long been conversant with them, and with the living inspiration which has given thee a true understanding of their nature and tendencies. Thy obedience to the laws of innocence has made a *paradise to thee*, of the same order of existence which has been a *wilderness to others*,—because *they* have consented that the tempers and propensities of wild beasts and malignant serpents, should inhabit and rule over them. Fear not then, my beloved friend, to surrender thyself wholly to the same precious government which has hitherto so evidently blessed thee. Let "the angels of thy Lord keep thee in their hands;" and all the confederated powers of evil shall neither harm nor hurt thee.

I wish to be affectionately remembered to thy parents, and many more who are ranked among my endeared friends.

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 2nd mo., 1830.

I am actuated, my dear cousin, as all my fellow-creatures are, (and ever have been) with an irrepres-

sible desire for happiness; I am, therefore, prepared to feel with and for thee in thy depressions and perplexities. As the animal part of our being is the first that receives our attention, it is not wonderful that we should all be more or less attracted by those things which seem to promise gratification to our inclinations; especially, when we perceive the additional allurements of the example of "kindreds, nations, tongues and people," prostrating all their energies and affections in devotion to the same golden and glittering images. But alas! alas! for poor human nature, if it were left *at peace* in this degraded state of its heaven-descended powers! The earth would swallow them up, and all that pertains to them; and the glorious destiny for which they were created, would be defeated; and, like the prodigal in the foreign land, every sensibility of the soul would be famished, with nothing better to sustain it than the husks on which the swine are fed. But the mercy and kindness of the God of love will not abandon us to such a condition.

— "Man shall be nobly pained!

The glorious foreigner distress'd, shall sigh
On thrones, and thou congratulate the sigh:"

because it evinces that all the "kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them" (emphatically including its religion) are totally incompetent to bestow *that peace* which the *Divine nature* manifested in and governing the *human*, can alone produce. This celestial visitant, therefore, comes not to send peace upon such an *earthly condition*, but a sword. And thus we see it, and so we feel it, whenever (like the Syrian king)

we build a Babylon by the might of *our* power, for the house of *our* kingdom, and for the glory of *our* majesty. Then this blessed "Watcher" who continually regards our situation, and this "Holy One" who seeks to save and to bless us,—commands "to hew down the tree which is rooted in the earth, and to cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit," in order to wean our affections from the light imaginations, represented by the birds of the air, and from sensual appetites and tempers, exemplified by the beasts of the earth.

I cannot doubt the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty;—I must therefore believe that the various states of experience which are witnessed by the children of men, are consistent with both; and in the important particulars of the *terrestrial* and *spiritual* relations of men, all the human family must inevitably reap according to their sowing. If they sow to the flesh, which is a native of this world, they reap carnal things; and if they sow spiritual things, they necessarily reap the same.

The great and unchangeable difference between the religion of Christ, and all others, (though falsely called by its name) consists in the entire spirituality of the former. Its object is God, who is a *Spirit*; its subject is the human soul, which is a *spirit*. The sacrifices and offerings which it enjoins, are *spiritual*; and the administrator of it—who is Christ the Lord—is God's *spiritual offspring*, "who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in light which no (natural) man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can

see." (1 Tim. vi. 16.) And this incapacity of seeing him, is founded upon the immutable fact, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

While people are taught to believe,—and are disposed to do it,—that "the minister of the true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man," was an *outward visible person*, instead of the *Divine Being* who was manifested in it,—and that the religion he came to introduce consisted in creeds, and doctrines, and carnal observances,—and that it is necessary to contend for these, by employing the weapons and indulging the feelings of enmity and strife towards our fellow-creatures,—there can be no end to "wars, and rumours of wars, to earthquakes and famines,—the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear." But as these awful phenomena are the necessary fruits of an outward and terrestrial religion, they "must first take place," that they may practically demonstrate their total inefficacy to produce "peace on earth, and good will to men;"—and that the cause which produces such effects, is therefore any thing else, rather than the gospel. As the soul becomes convinced of this, and is prepared to withdraw its homage from, and abandon its dependence upon outward things, it is then qualified to welcome with hosannas, the presence of the spiritual "son of God,"—becoming the "son of man" by being born in man, and possessing power to overcome the enemies of man,—which are the "spiritual wickednesses

in high places" spoken of by the apostle,—to heal all his diseases, and to raise him from death to life.

A letter from C. H. informs us that the beloved and excellent Elias Hicks passed from his habitation in the earthly tabernacle, on the 28th inst. He is gathered, I have no doubt, like fruit fully ripe, to an eternal state of bliss, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. His life has exhibited a lovely example of the blessed effects of obedience to pure principles. How wonderfully he has been preserved in meekness and gentleness, amid all the tempests which have assailed him! The foundation upon which he built, was the immovable rock of Divine Truth; and therefore no winds of doctrine, no floods of persecution, could either shake or overwhelm him.

My best love salutes thee and all the members of the family.

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 6th, 1830.

Thy two letters, my dear C., are at hand; the letter to my Anna, giving an account of the peaceful close of the well-spent life of thy beloved grandfather, afforded us the first information of that important event.

I truly and most affectionately condole with his bereaved relatives, on account of their loss of so great a treasure as he was to them. But *for him*, I cannot mourn; because I am assured that the imperishable crowns of "glory—immortality—and eternal life," are his unspeakable possession. He has "fought the good fight" against the principles and powers of evil. He

“has finished his course” of assigned duties. He has “kept the faith” that “worketh by love to the purifying of the heart.” And what more could our fondest wishes desire for him? As it regards his fellow-creatures,—more especially those who had the advantage of a personal acquaintance and intimacy with him,—his conduct and conversation,—his innocent life and faultless manners,—have spoken, even more powerfully than his tongue, or his pen;—demonstrating the momentous and all-interesting truth, that it is the Divine Life, (and not words and theories about it,) that impresses the “image of God” upon the human soul: and that this image does not consist in *shape, form, or colour*, but in “graciousness,—mercy,—long suffering,—and the aboundings of goodness and truth.” His adversaries, who were offended at him because of the spirituality of his views and teachings,—have endeavoured “to sift him as wheat.” “They shot at him, and hated him.” But their arrows were repelled by the armour of righteousness, with which he was defended. And the closer he was proven, the more the excellency of that *living power* which was his support and dependance, became apparent. So that the fire of their anger could neither hurt him, nor impress even its smell upon the garments of innocence, with which he was clothed.

The impartial and unchangeable kindness of the Father of mercies, my young friend, has given to all of us access to the same universal Fountain, the streams of which made him so pure. For, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst,

Come;—and let him that heareth, say, Come; yea, all that will, may come, and drink of the water of life freely.” I have not a shadow of doubt, that the invitation is thus universal. It is uttered, not only in the voice of words, but more veritably and infallibly in the language of facts and feelings,—powers and impressions,—which are easily and universally understood. And if the children of men would be persuaded to hearken to the “still (noiseless) voice” which speaks through these, they would not remain so greatly mistaken and deluded, as too many of them are.

How often hast thou known and felt for thyself, and in thyself, the sweet influences of this ineffable Teacher! And thy innocent spirit can bear testimony that he is “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from all sin;” and that all his teachings are to induce those that will follow him, “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,—and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world:”—not to abridge their enjoyments, nor to narrow the range of their felicity, but to secure to their possession “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” For, all those who have obeyed his authority, in all ages, have found themselves hedged round by safety; and though “thousands might fall at their side, and ten thousands at their right hand,”—yet the agents of destruction could not come nigh them.

Witness the pitiable victims of pride,—and hatred,—and fierceness,—and avarice,—and cruelty,—and injustice,—and intemperance, &c. These cannot be, nor never were successfully resisted, by the feeble

powers of words and doctrines,—creeds and systems! No: our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of more efficient help than these can afford: and his everlasting kindness has accordingly “given his angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways.”—And these angels are the living impulses of his own Divine nature, manifested and working in us to produce humility,—love,—gentleness,—liberality,—mercy,—justice,—temperance, &c., which “bear us up in their hands,” and infallibly save us from dashing against the things which our eyes have seen to have been the very ministers and artificers of destruction to the wicked.

Had I been near enough to you, all my affections would have urged me to have been present upon the solemn occasion of my beloved friend’s interment. But I doubt not, that many of you were sensible of the presence of him who is greater than Solomon or Jonas; and that you were comforted in the experience of that everlasting unity which subsists in spirit, and is full of peace.

Thou wilt be pleased to hear that all thy friends here are in usual health. Thy little bright-eyed sprightly name-sake improves rapidly. Making what I suppose to be a sufficient abatement for parental partiality, she seems to me one of the most intelligent little creatures I ever saw. At two years old, she speaks the English language almost as plainly as any of us; and I am often surprised at her power of availing herself (apparently without effort) of proper terms to express even new ideas. My love to thy parents,

and to all my friends, in which I am cordially joined by every member of my family.

Would there be any impropriety in requesting thee to send me a copy of thy dear grandfather's last letter? If it will not be improper, thou wilt, by sending it, add one more favour to the many I have already received at thy hands, and by no means diminish the affectionate attachment with which I am most sincerely thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 15th, 1830.

My dear friend's letter of — was duly received, and produced the usual effects of his acceptable communications. It excited and refreshed, in my mind, that class of mental sensations which are always associated with comfort and enjoyment. Were I to follow my inclinations, I should assuredly be incited to make the effort to join you at your approaching Yearly Meeting; for I have never felt a greater satisfaction than when I have been commissioned and qualified to open to my fellow creatures, the exalted and interesting truths of the gospel of Christ: but I know that the "excellency of the power" by which alone this can be done, "is of God, and not of us." It would therefore be great temerity in me to construe my inclinations into a *commission*, or to depend upon them to furnish the proper *qualification* for this momentous engagement.

I should rejoice if I had the pen of a ready writer, that I might embody in a more permanent form than

by speech, the important views which through Divine mercy may be, as well as have been, displayed to my understanding. I know it to be the privilege of all intelligent creatures, to have access to the God of love and of power; I also know that there is no other way, truth, or life, by which this access is attainable, but the one living manifestation, or birth of this "wisdom and power of God" which is called "Christ." By this manifestation, all the fruits, or effects of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, goodness, &c., are produced in the soul of man; and it is a self-evident fact, that without the agency of these to produce, in endless succession, their own proper effects, the soul must remain a stranger "to the covenant of promise, and without God in the world;" and, of course, an inhabitant of that wilderness condition, in which it is a perpetual prey to the devouring and destructive tempers and propensities, which are natural to the wolves and leopards, and lions and serpents of the wildernesses and deserts of the outward world.

Again, if the soul fall from its native innocence and privileges, and become the vassal of these destructive and tormenting influences, the same celestial manifestation of God in the flesh, of which the soul is a tenant at will, is its only possible Redeemer and Liberator; because it is from him only that every good and every perfect gift comes. It is he who can "change the wilderness into Eden, and the desert into a garden of the Lord," by supplanting the doleful, ravenous, and malignant tempers of the mind,—inspiring,—inbreathing his own Divine nature into it; which thereby becomes

impressed with his image of holiness and love, the operations of which, produce "joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of melody," as inevitably as their antagonists, wickedness and hatred, bring forth "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

These are some of my views upon the origin, nature, and effects of the principles and powers which constitute the realities of the Christian religion; and they appear to me to render all honour and praise to Christ, the only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

I remain thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 3rd mo. 29th, 1830.

Do not suppose, my young friend, that I have forgotten thee, because I have not yet replied to thy kind letter of 1st month 27th. My friendship for thee is not founded upon fugitive circumstances, but is built, I hope, upon the basis of religious fellowship, which forms the sweetest and most durable ground of social communion. I am fully aware that there is (as thou sayest) a great diversity of talents; but it is at the same time equally true and encouraging, that in every instance, he or she who is faithful over the few things which are first committed to their trust, will infallibly "be made rulers over more;"—until they shall come to abound in "the good and perfect gifts" which are benevolently and liberally bestowed by the Father of mercies. I think there is good reason to believe, that men do not so generally mistake, by forming wrong estimates of the *number* of talents bestowed upon them,

as they do in respect to what constitutes the *talents appertaining to eternal life*. They either do not use them for the purposes intended by the gracious Giver of them,—or they substitute a dependance upon other *things* which never did, nor never can produce the desired effects. This latter mistake has been the parent of all superstition; and time itself would fail to enumerate the *sighs*, and *tears*, and *miseries*, which have sprung from its desolating dominion.

“The truth as it is in Jesus,” is simple, but perfect. It consists in the *law of God*, written in living characters,—not upon paper, or tables of stone, but upon *the heart*. And in looking to other things, men become bewildered in a cloud of imaginations and uncertainties, which keep them from the truth, and leave them without help in their adversities. It has been in this way that a *deplorable*, instead of a *beneficial* use, has been made of the scriptures of Truth, which contain a record of the experience and counsel of saints and prophets: Instead of adverting to the principles and powers, by which their heavenly Father wrought in them “both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” imbuing them with wisdom and holiness,—the children of superstition have made images in their own minds, (as the ancients did of gold and silver, wood and stone) agreeably to their several fancies; and have not only worshipped them, but used all their energies to persuade all people to bow down to them, and worship them also.

And yet the scriptures are not to blame for these perversions: their directions are clear and simple.

Witness the preaching of the blessed Jesus: "Blessed are the *pure in heart*; blessed are the *meek*; blessed are the *peace-makers*; blessed are the hungerers and thirsters after *righteousness*," &c. The apostle Peter is also exceedingly plain: "Add to your faith, virtue;—and to virtue, knowledge,—temperance,—patience,—godliness,—brotherly kindness, and charity." Surely the intelligent human family know what *these things are*, as well as they know what animals and vegetables are. There is no *mystery* about them; nor are their natural effects either concealed or unsearchable; but all may know them, from the least to the greatest. If they are cultivated or occupied, they will prove themselves to be Divine *gifts and talents*, capable of an everlasting increase; and they will enrich their possessors with the treasures of *purity,—meekness,—mercy,—faithfulness,—virtue,—knowledge,—temperance,—patience, &c.*; verifying the further declaration of the apostle: "If these things be in you, and abound, *they* make you, that you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, my dear M., what greater blessing can any sensitive soul desire, than to "have an entrance thus abundantly ministered to it, into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" And the apostle ascribes this blessed consummation, not to the notions of men about *these things*, but to the influence or operation of *the things* themselves. (See 2nd Peter, chapter 1st.)

Though the remoteness of our habitations prevents us from enjoying frequent personal intercourse, yet it

is a precious privilege that our minds are not equally shackled. We can still commune in spirit; and by cultivating the precious gifts of our heavenly Father, we may approach nearer and nearer to *Him*.

The many dear friends that I should probably meet with, were I to go to your approaching Yearly Meeting, furnishes a strong impulse to my natural affections to do so. But it would be temerity in me to proceed upon that ground alone, with the expectation that I should thereby be qualified for religious usefulness. I am therefore constrained to relinquish the prospect. It would, however, give me pleasure to hear, through the medium of thy pen, how you fare. My affectionate remembrance is presented to thy father and mother;—and to all my friends in your neighbourhood who may inquire after me, please to present the kind salutation of thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 4th mo. 17th, 1830.

Many thanks for thy kindness in sending me so soon, the last letter of thy venerated ancestor. It was just such an one as I could have desired, if I had been possessed of the privilege of choosing. I have read it to a number of persons, Friends and others, and have met with no dissentient,—all approve of it. I see by the papers that it has been printed; and I intend to procure a number of the printed copies for distribution, with a hope that the earnest recommendation which it contains, of the spiritual medium by which spiritual discernment is alone practicable, or spiritual influences

produced,—may have the effect to turn the attention of those who peruse it, from the more than worthless systems of human theology, to “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face (or living presence) of Jesus Christ,” who is “the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

It is much to be lamented, that the human mind should be generally so shackled by erroneous impressions, as to be incapable of admitting the simple fact, so plainly stated in the scriptures and confirmed by experience, that “Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God,” is omnipresent and eternal;—that he is a pure and holy Spirit,—for the reception of whom, all human nature is a prepared body; that the religion of which he is the author, is entirely a spiritual thing, consisting in the operations of the Divine life upon the human soul, to fill it with perpetually increasing measures of “righteousness, goodness, and truth;”—and divesting it thereby of every temper and propensity which can hurt or destroy. In this way it is, that the kingdoms of this world can become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ. And by these holy influences and operations, he demonstrates that “he dwells with us, and is in us.”

But, alas! how many millions of money are expended in the world, to persuade the children of men to place their confidence in systems, which are the reverse of these heavenly powers; and are made up of the *weakness and folly of men!* For truly, it cannot be justly deemed any thing better than weakness and folly, to teach that any thing which men can *say or do,*

can in any degree answer as a substitute for the power and wisdom of God,—or contrive a better way to make men good and happy, than by their operations. The works that human systems have always done, have been to distract the attention by a multiplicity of doctrines and opinions; so that the living realities which are continually springing up in the mind, and are the real agents by which *good* and *evil* are generated there,—are neglected and overlooked: thus fulfilling the declaration, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard I have not kept.”

In this state, a multitude of causeless fears and delusive hopes are alternately excited,—which place the mind in a condition resembling a ship on a stormy ocean, always agitated, and successively elevated or depressed, according to the rise and fall of the waves upon which it floats. What a precious and merciful privilege it is, my dear friend, that in the midst of this tumult and confusion, we all have access to that blessed Being who created *the islands*, and has the same power to make us *like them*, firm and immovable, though surrounded on all sides by fluctuation! To this state, the admonition is addressed;—“Keep silence before me, O islands, and let the people renew their strength.”

I rejoice in the persuasion, that thy mind has long been familiar with the pure influences of the Holy Spirit, which alone performs the miracles of healing and preservation. And if it be asked, Who is it that “hath wrought and done this” for thee, as well as in all “generations from the beginning?”—the answer

must be given in the language of the prophet, "I the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am he." And it is of the greatest consequence, that thou shouldst know that it is *he alone* whose light has shone upon thee, and enabled thee to discriminate clearly between the nature of those principles, which, being diffusions of the Divine nature, are "the sons of God"—and that class of adverse powers, which constitute the being and nature of satan. I do not hesitate for one moment to believe, that like Job thou hast seen these "sons of God" presenting themselves before the Lord, in thy own mind, and "satan presenting himself" with them. Possibly thou mayst not have noticed the identity of thy experience with Job's; but that does not alter the similarity of the fact. For, if it be true that every thing which is "pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy,"—are of "the wisdom that cometh from above;"—then it must also be true, that every thing which is "earthly, sensual, and devilish," must be from "the wisdom that is from beneath." I suppose that thou hast never had a doubt as to the origin and tendencies of either class, nor as to the reality of their presentation before the view of thy mind. I am, therefore, fully warranted in asserting, and thou in believing, that it is thy heavenly Father who hath *of the former* "built a hedge about thee, and about all that is truly thine;"—by which the latter has been fenced off from thee,—and a host of destructive enemies (the least of which would

have changed thy Eden into a wilderness) have been prevented from hurting or destroying thee.

I feel a strong attraction towards your next Yearly Meeting;—and after its close, to some of the northern and western parts of your State; and if nothing should occur to obscure my present prospect, I shall probably ask permission of our ensuing monthly and Quarterly meetings, for the purpose.

All my dear family join me in an affectionate salutation to thy beloved father and mother, and as usual a full tide of love flows to thyself from every one of us, including thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 5th mo. 10th, 1830.

It gave me great pleasure to hear, through our friend Willet Hicks, and through various other channels, that your late Yearly Meeting was favoured with such evidence of Divine regard, as rendered it a season of much refreshment and instruction. My thoughts and affections were often with you,—attracted there by the nature of the occasion, and by the sincere attachment which binds my heart to many of my Philadelphia friends. I have also heard, that the other Yearly Meeting has finished its creed. It is to be lamented, in relation to it, that there should exist in the view of its leading members, a necessity for any such thing;—when all mankind have access to the faith mentioned by the apostles, as “the gift of God;”—“which worketh by love, to the purifying

of the heart;" "which is our victory over the world;" and "showeth itself by its works."

What a strange infatuation it is for men to suppose, that words of any kind, whether written, printed, or uttered, can constitute the faith which performs these important works! And yet the wise and learned of this world, seem to have been disposed always to blunder upon the absurdity; notwithstanding the confluent testimony of facts, scripture, and reason, to the contrary. Witness the multitude of contradictory statements with which the world is, and has been deluged, under the name of faith;—and of which the wise, and noble, and learned, (so called) have always been the authors and promoters. But all who have come to the possession of that faith which is the gift of God, and not the manufacture of man,—have found it to be a living reality,—possessing and exercising the powers ascribed to it by the holy men of old. It never made a sectarist, nor ever prescribed a creed. But its blessed office has always been, to make all the children of men righteous, and happy;—to gather them all into the same fold, inclosed by the same protecting virtues, and nourished by the same heavenly food.

As the *principle of evil* is truly said to be "going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom it may devour,"—and all the world has borne witness to the *reality* of its *existence*, and suffered by its *destructive influences*,—and known the nature of the *powers* by which it *works*: so, it is alike self-evident to all, that the living energy of Divine goodness is also perpetu-

ally present with the children of men,—offering its precious gifts to their acceptance. And as they become willing to accept the donations, they find to their unspeakable joy, that he gives them powers, (powers that are as knowable as the powers of evil,) that change the “wilderness into a fruitful field, and make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.” But no written creed,—no outward profession, ever had the smallest power in this important concern: and therefore, the homage of the soul devoted to things of that kind, is as entirely *idolatry*, and they are as really *idols*, as the *golden calves which Aaron made*, or the *Dagon* of the Philistines.

Surely, I need not tell thee that my motive for mentioning these truths, is to invite thy attention to their presence and development in thy own mind; for there, (as it regards thy own present and continual happiness,) the kingdom of God must be found;—and there, the heaven that results from his dominion, must be experienced;—as it is said in scripture,—“Heaven is my throne.” His life-giving presence is all-sufficient to rule, support, and nourish thy spirit, until its every faculty and every power shall be purified and exalted; and it can make thee a daughter indeed of the King of kings, “all glorious within.”

My monthly meeting has given me a minute of its concurrence with my prospect of religious duty, to attend the next Yearly Meeting in New York, and some other parts of that State, and of the intervening States, on my return.

With the remembrance of love to all the members
of your family, I am thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER,

Divine love now shone conspicuously in the character of our beloved relative. In a state of child-like simplicity and meekness; his mind was indued with a deep and clear perception of Divine truths. Under the dominion of these blessed principles, which kept him actively employed in promoting the good of his fellow-beings, he felt commissioned, in the 4th month of the year 1830, as he states in the foregoing letter, to resume his travels in the ministry. The following minute of concurrence, the last he ever applied for, was obtained from the monthly meeting on this occasion, viz:

“Our beloved friend Edward Stabler, an approved minister, opened in both meetings, [the meetings of men and women for transacting their respective business, are alluded to, which are separately held,] a prospect he had, to visit in the love of the gospel the next Yearly Meeting of Friends to be held in New York, and such of the northern and other parts of that State, (and the intervening States upon his return,) as the sense of religious duty may require; which claiming the serious consideration of Friends, full unity was expressed with his prospect, and he was encouraged to proceed,” &c.

His progress in this journey, and his tender feelings towards his family, are interestingly described in the following letters addressed to them.

Skaneateles, New York State, 6th mo. 29th, 1830.

I have been calculating the distance which now separates me from my precious wife, and my equally precious children,—and find it to be upwards of six hundred miles. What a distance from all that is most dear to me on earth! But I am favoured with uninterrupted health, and (what is a still greater favour) with a mind rendered peaceful, by an abiding sense that I am in the way of my duty; and this sense reconciles me to the great privation of all my delightful home enjoyments. * * * I hope this day to hear from thee at Auburn, to which place I requested Friends at Utica to forward my letters; and if I receive none there, I shall leave word to have them sent still farther on. I do not expect to go much farther west, but shall probably in a few days turn to the eastward and southward, to attend some of the meetings in progression between this place and New York city, on a returning course.

This is a wonderful country; beautified with lakes, canals, villages, and highly improved farms. We travel by the canal boats with perfect safety, night and day, with good living and good company, without fatigue, and at very moderate expense. J. H. is now my companion; and I am writing at L. P. M.'s on the beautiful margin of the beautiful Skaneateles lake. If I could write with facility, I would attempt to delineate its picture for the amusement and gratification of my dear family; but my crippled hand will deprive you all of the pleasure of a description, until

I may be favoured to reach home, when my tongue will much easier perform the office.

Our friends continue to receive us every where with much kindness and hospitality; and when we have meetings, the people of other societies who attend, seem to be impressed with great interest; and solemnity has in every instance been the sweet covering of the assemblies.

I long to hear of thy welfare, and of the health of my other dear ones; but I hope I have surrendered you up to the keeping of Him who loves you better than a poor creature like me can love you; and he has unlimited power and goodness, both to devise and accomplish the best for you: to him therefore I must leave you, together with my own soul, which is scarcely more precious to the affections of my heart than you are. I dwell upon the idea of each dear one, with distinct and excited love. How are you all? Oh! how the glowing impulses of inexpressible love flow towards you! Will some of you please to write to your poor wanderer, soon after you receive this? As I said, I expect to go to Auburn to-day, where there is a meeting appointed for this evening;—to Scipio the next day; and so on to different places, seven or eight days more in these parts, and then commence the returning route. There are several large settlements and towns, to which I shall probably be directed on my return to New York, that may take up ten days or two weeks after my leaving this section of the State; but thou mayst rest assured, that

the influence which draws me towards thee and my dear children, will not permit me to spend my time in idleness, any more than will the obligation of religious duty.

I find, as usual, a large and interesting field of service in the openings of Divine Truth, as to the reality and presence in every heart, of the "tree of life," ("Christ within the hope of glory,") which produces there "the fruits of the Spirit," in all the powers of "righteousness, goodness, and truth." These precious things, explained in the way of conversation, where restraint is thrown off, and each one left at liberty to state objections, if they have any, or to ask for further explanations where there is not perfect clearness,—constitute in my view, a portion of exercise not less profitable than public meetings: and I find as great a reward for attending to the openings of duty in this respect, as in the other.

My love salutes you all, including friends and relations as if named, and I am as ever most affectionately your own

EDWARD STABLER.

Utica, 7th mo. 6th, 1830.

Your joint and most acceptable letter of the 23rd ultimo, I received at Scipio, about eight miles to the west of this place. There are many Friends in that district of country, and I attended all their meetings; and with great cheerfulness and good-will, they extended at my request information among their neigh-

bours, who flocked in large numbers to the meetings; and I judge, from their seriousness and intense attention, that they were well satisfied; and such was the report also of Friends who heard them express their approbation.

I wrote to thee on the 29th ult. from the banks of the beautiful Skaneateles lake. That letter I hope is at hand before this time, and that you have thereby been relieved from anxiety about me, as my health then was and still is very good.

There are a few Friends in this large village, and I expect to have a meeting with them this evening. It is expected that only a few of the inhabitants will attend, as Friends tell me that they never have been able to prevail upon many of them to come to meetings. Money seems to be too much the object of their devotion; and the dictates of the priests, too much their religion. But I nevertheless hope, that in many minds there is something better than all this, (like the prophets in the caves, or Jesus in the sepulchre,) which will arise and become known, where it is now buried under earthly feelings and interests, or entombed in sepulchres of stone,—and will yet perform miracles of deliverance and instruction.

I expect to go in the stage to-morrow to the town called Bridgewater, situated to the south of this, where there is a meeting of Friends; and if they should turn out to be such living and affectionate ones as those I left at Skaneateles and Scipio, I shall feel at home among them. * * * The country about Scipio,

from which I have just returned, take it altogether, surpasses in fertility any country I ever saw; and the beautiful lakes render it lovely beyond description. The land along Cayuga lake, which is four miles wide and forty miles long, is fruitful to the very edge of the water, (which is as transparent as the water of a spring) and at every three or four miles there is a village. As far as the eye can see, the intervals are occupied with finely cultivated farms, luxuriant in wheat, corn, &c.; and then the ease and cheapness with which they send their produce to market, by the lakes and canals, render it an easy matter, not only to live in abundance, but to increase in wealth, until the inhabitants become, very generally, independent in their circumstances. Should the Chesapeake and Ohio canal become as beneficial as these are, our town must again rise in wealth and distinction.

Do these remarks make thee suspicious that I am tempted to become earthly-minded in advancing life? I hope it is not the case; but when I look at our numerous flock of beloved children, it is pleasant to see the probability of our property becoming more valuable, and the means to educate and enable them to live comfortably in the world, proportionately increased.

It is very pleasant to hear that my dear sister Deborah is so much improved. Send my love to her when you next write to our relations in Sandy Spring neighbourhood. * * * Tell the dear little boys, Henry and Richard, that I am delighted to hear they

are so good; that I do love them, and that they may make me love them more and more, by increasing in goodness.

If you have an opportunity to send to M. J., give my affectionate remembrance to her, and say that her salutation, "like a brook by the way," was truly refreshing. A. J's, remembrance and kind message were truly acceptable. It has frequently happened when I have been from home, that W. L. has saluted me with a message of brotherly love. I wish William or Thomas to give my love to him. What is the reason that my dear Thomas never sends an account of himself to cheer his absent father? I hope he keeps in health; for he is embraced in common with all the rest, by the ardent and unabated love of your

EDWARD STABLER.

Philadelphia, 8th mo. 3rd, 1830.

I think, my dear Mary, that thou and my precious children can scarcely form an adequate idea of the great comfort and relief that are afforded to my (constitutionally) anxious mind, by the reception of your letters; especially when like the last they convey the delightful intelligence of your general welfare.

After I wrote to you last, I went with my kind friend Willet Hicks to Westbury Quarterly meeting, which held three days. I made my home with our friends at Jericho;—found and left them all well, and received from them all, the most affectionate attentions. On seventh-day I returned to New York, and attended their two meetings on first-day; in which I had open

and solemn service to crowded audiences. On leaving New York, the country air revived me from the debilitating effect of its oven-like heat at this time of the year, and an affectionate reception by my friends in Trenton and in Bucks county, added its salutary influence.

I went on to appoint and attend meetings all last week, until I arrived at our dear friend John Comly's. At Byberry where he lives, I attended an appointed meeting; and on first-day morning, he and several of his family came with me to Philadelphia. I went to our brother's, and was very kindly received; but sister A. had previously made an arrangement to go with their children to the Springs, near Wilmington; and as it was important to her health, I insisted upon her not staying at home on account of my arrival. To-day, the Philadelphia Quarterly meeting will be held; and to-morrow I expect to go to Abington Quarterly meeting. On sixth-day, I have a prospect of attending an appointed meeting at Haddonfield in Jersey; and as far as I now see, I shall then be permitted to turn my face towards home—dear home—and its still dearer inmates, where I hope, by actions, and words, and every mode of endearment, to convince them how very precious they are, individually and collectively, to the heart of their own

EDWARD STABLER.

During the five months, which intervened between his return from this journey and the time of his death, the subject of this narrative was frequently engaged in

communicating to his absent friends the views he was favoured with, and his strong desires for their welfare. The ensuing letter, having some reference to his late travels, was sent to one of his correspondents who was afflicted with severe rheumatic affections.

Alexandria, 8th mo. 21st, 1830.

It appears to be one of the terms of our present probationary state, that we must pay an especial price for all our exclusive attachments. Since the morning I parted with thee, at the door of our beloved and hospitable friends at Jericho, my mind has often been taxed with numerous feelings of regret, that our habitations were so remote from each other, as to admit so seldom of personal intercourse. My attachment has increased with our acquaintance, and I have rejoiced to perceive in thy gentle spirit, a vivid susceptibility to those impressions,—and, an intelligence to estimate properly those realities which are more important than all others.

The material world, with its evanescent glories and enjoyments, too much absorbs the attention of the multitude. Its interests and its pleasures are woven into a vail, which hides from their view the vision of *spiritual things*;—so that some even doubt their certainty;—and others who admit their existence, remain in the “outward court,” and endeavour to be contented with guessing *what* and *where* they are. This state of things is surely deplorable for them who indulge it,—because it estranges them from the noblest order of enjoyments, and causes them to grope in darkness, and in a foreign

land, for those gratifications, without which no immortal spirit can ever be satisfied. But thou, my dear friend, hast known that Light which is "above the brightness of the sun" in its noon-day splendour. It has shown thee thy *thoughts* and thy *desires*, and the *objects* of them. And among these, it has distinguished between the *precious* and the *vile*; and has enabled thee to choose the former. Its nature and effects prove it to be a "light from heaven:" for sun-shine (thou knowest) never showed a *thought*, nor revealed an *affection*.

But notwithstanding it is a common privilege of the human family to know this Light, and the objects it discovers and distinguishes,—yet how easily are they "blinded by the god of this world!" Its pomp and its glitter delude them into the persuasion, that the *good* which they are seeking, will be found in *them*; but they perish, and leave their worshippers disappointed and disconsolate. "Ye have taken away my gods *which I have made*,—and what have I more?"

May I not congratulate my beloved friend, even upon the distressing dispensations to which she has been subjected,—in as far as they have been instrumental in rending this vail,—and disclosing to her mental sight the blessed vision of the "mercy seat," and the true "cherubims of glory which overshadow it;—and the real "altar" upon which the *animal sacrifices* are made, that reconcile the soul to its Creator, and constitute the true atonement which restores it to an union with the Divine harmony, which God pronounces good,—*because it is so*. . . When I have sat be-

side thee, and have witnessed with tremulous sympathy, thy tender frame twinging with spasmodic pain;—when I have heard the deep sighs of thy suffering, but patient bosom;—I have found it impossible to believe, that these visitations were the messengers of cruelty to such an one as thou art;—but rather, that the Father of mercies was treating thee as a beloved daughter, whom he was gradually weaning from *every tie—to every thing*, but his own “excellent glory,”—his own surpassing beauty. How gladly would my misdeeming affection have shielded thee from affliction! But my powers were as limited as my judgment; and I was prevented from arresting the progress of those operations, by which it was intended by infinite Goodness to refine, exalt, and beatify thy innocent spirit.

I have had a long travel since I saw thee; and was favoured through all the changes of time, place, and circumstances, with a cheering consciousness that I was in the path of my duty. I returned to my precious family on the 12th instant, and found them all in good health, with an affectionate welcome for their long absented wanderer. Thy letter of 1st inst. was handed me in Philadelphia, and it was cordially acceptable. It would, however, have been doubly so, could it have contained the pleasing information that thy health was restored. The present which accompanied it, I shall make my constant associate; not that I stand in need of its aid to put me in mind of the donor, for the idea is indelibly imprinted upon my heart by the stronger agency of christian love.

Assure thy parents, brothers and sister, and also thy cousin, of my kind remembrance of them. If thou knew how much satisfaction I receive from thy letters, I think thy kindness would induce thee to write again soon and frequently to thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

The following letter was addressed to his eldest daughter, (now deceased) who was then married, and living at the village of Waterford, in the State of Virginia.

Alexandria, Fourth-day, the 10th. of 11th mo., 1830.

My dear Elizabeth's letter addressed to me in Baltimore, was duly received; and it afforded me so much satisfaction that I would have acknowledged it from there, if the business of the Yearly Meeting had admitted of it. I felt thankful for the degree of health which my dear child had been favoured with, among so many sick ones, and that her only attack of disease had been of so mild a character.

Thy letter received to-day, informs me of thy dear little son's having the whooping cough. Several of my children had it at this season of the year,—and, as well as I remember, more favourably than some of the others who had it in the spring. I hope it will turn out as favourably for thy little boy.

My health has not been very good, since my return from my northern visit last summer. I have had several returns of slight disease; and latterly, the erysipelatous eruption (which thou mayst remember

succeded the long illness with my hand and arm) has broken out again with its accustomed violence. These impediments will prevent me from attending our next Quarterly meeting; but I expect there will be no scarcity of ministers. George Hatton and Hannah Parker will probably be there; and as Daniel Quinby expected to be with us on the first of this week, and did not come, I have thought it a possible case, that he may also have felt a concern to be present at the Quarterly meeting, and have directed his course accordingly.

We all particularly regret the occurrence of whooping cough, as a messenger forbidding thy visit to us; as we were anticipating with great pleasure the prospect of having thee with us for a few weeks. But we must submit; and if we can do it under the full persuasion that He, whose Divine Providence is in all things actuated by infinite goodness,—orders and arranges all the concerns of time for the best, we shall find it easier to submit than to murmur. My warmest love salutes thee, my beloved child, with earnest desires for thy preservation from all that can hurt or destroy, as respects both mind and person. My love is to Joseph and the dear little boy, and all my friends.

I am thy affectionate father,

EDWARD STABLER.

The following remarks occur in a letter to an intimate friend, dated the 1st of the 10th mo. 1830.

I rejoice, my beloved brother, in the evidences which are bursting forth all over the world, that the

minds of the human family are expanding beyond the restraints of superstition and selfish bigotry; and that the spirit of inquiry in all the interesting departments of human knowledge, is rapidly eliciting truths of all sorts; which, advancing in the mightiness of their own irresistible power, are crushing into annihilation the pigmy strength of false science and false religion.—“I have just found out such a thing,” (said the illustrious Paschal when a boy,) “and that is the reason why I am trying to find out what I am now attempting.” He was pursuing mathematical truths, without a teacher, and without books, and without any knowledge of even mathematical terms; but he had found some truths, and the discovery was so delightful that he was ardently in search of others. And is not *religious truth* (the mighty agent by which the soul is made capable of ascending from earth to heaven,) more lovely, more interesting, more important, than mathematical truth? How then can it be otherwise, than that the discoveries which are made, and making in this department, shall also ravish with their beauty, and enrapture with their delights,—and cause the minds which perceive them “to mount up with wings as eagles,—to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint?”

The first of the following communications, is an extract from a letter to an acquaintance, who had requested information in regard to the effects of their known temperance, on the Society of Friends.

The present appears to be a proper occasion to state, that the attention of *Baltimore Yearly Meeting* had been, many years before, first called to a consideration of the unnecessary use of ardent spirits, by our friend the late EVAN THOMAS, a valued minister residing in Baltimore. Through a long life, he bore a clear and consistent testimony against the unnecessary use of inebriating drinks, by entirely abstaining from them; and, a short time before his decease, in a communication addressed to the Yearly Meeting, he stated that for the last sixty years of his life, he had not, to his knowledge, taken one drop of distilled spirits as a beverage. Many others had seen, with him, the evils of this practice, and found safety in personal obedience to their convictions; but he felt an obligation to go further, and call the attention of his friends generally to the concern. The subject became one of serious deliberation, in the first place, by the members of his own meeting; then, within a wider range; and at length throughout the Society. It worked its way by the mild force of example and precept, until, like the gentle rising of the tide, the whole Yearly Meeting was covered with its influence.

Alexandria, 8th mo. 23rd, 1830.

The letter of my friend W. C. came to hand just after my return from an absence of nearly three months; and a number of concerns which necessarily engaged my attention, have prevented me from replying to it until the present time.

The experience of the Society of Friends has proven to their satisfaction, not only that *ardent spirits* are unnecessary, as a drink, to promote health, cheerfulness, or prosperity,—but that all these, and righteousness in all other respects, flourish best, and are more easily practiced by refraining from their use altogether. We have few statistical accounts, that relate to the subject. The record of births and deaths is perhaps the only one; but as life is prolonged or shortened by many other circumstances besides the use or disuse of ardent spirits, it does not seem to me that a record of that kind could be of much use in furnishing arguments or illustrations. But it is nevertheless practically true, that innumerable calamities are successfully fenced off from the Society, by the bulwark of temperance in relation to this article. I have known the Society long; and as far as I can be deemed a dispassionate witness, I am prepared to testify, that I have not known any other which contained (in the same number) so large a proportion of tranquil, prosperous, and happy people. I have not been unmindful to trace these most desirable effects to their causes; and it appears to me, that the Society has been indebted for this delightful pre-eminence, to the experimental nature of their education. The attention of their children and fellow members has been directed, not to *theories*, but to *things*: and while some have been contented with speculation, *they* have been more or less engaged to practice “righteousness and temperance;” and their tranquillity and comfort, indi-

vidually and collectively, have always been proportioned to their faithfulness.

The existence of the Society of Friends has been in some degree important to the world, by exhibiting an example of the effects, to a certain extent, of practical righteousness. Had the example been perfect in them, or in any other people, the effect would have been overwhelming; and would long since have settled the question, "upon what part of earth's surface the garden of Eden was situated," by showing that it existed upon any and every part, where the practice of righteousness was perfected.

I am with much respect thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 8th mo. 30th, 1830.

Very gladly would I be to thee, my dear friend, and in myself, all that thy kind partiality supposes me to be: but I am humbled under an abiding consciousness, "that in me,—that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Yet there is no cause for discouragement nor dejection on this account, either to thee or to me;—because we can derive from it the certain conviction, that "the excellency of all holy power is of God, and not of us." This conviction will prepare us to abandon all dependance upon ourselves, and induce us to look to the munificence of Him, to whom "the kingdom, the power, and the glory," exclusively belong forever. We are all *receivers only*, of the treasures of his love and goodness. The *wisdom* and *knowledge*, by which he casts out of our minds the

evil spirits of *folly* and *ignorance*, are his own: therefore he tells us "not to rejoice that the evil spirits are subject to us;—but rather, because our names are written in heaven." For though the kingdom, the power, and the glory, belong to *him alone*,—yet the effects which they produce in our souls, are *ours*:—and heaven becomes our blessed possession, or habitation, by means of the "peace and joy" which are wrought in us by the powers of righteousness, that are the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Lightly as thou seemest to estimate thy importance among my correspondents, thy attachment is an invaluable treasure; and all that I can do to deserve it, is far below its worth. I will not therefore *pretend to merit* it; but I will gladly avail myself of its *existence*, and of its tendency to prepare the way for mutual confidence,—to call the attention of thy mind to those pure and heavenly powers, which have been the inmates of thy heart all thy life long. To their impulses, thou hast been indebted for all thy joy;—and even when, from immaturity of experience, it was impossible for thee to advert to their agency,—they have nevertheless preserved and protected thee. It is equally true, that all the distress which has afflicted thee, has issued from other fountains. But, in this mingled experience, no strange thing has happened to thee. The same trials and experiences have been witnessed before thee, by saints and martyrs, prophets and apostles. They were assailed by temptations, as thou hast been;—they felt them, as thou hast done. And their victory over them, was by the operations

of the self-same Divine and immutable power which invites thy innocent spirit, by all its holy and affectionate impulses, to "come with him from Lebanon; to look to him from the top of Amana,—from the top of Shenir and Hermon,—from the lions' dens,—from the mountains of the leopards." That is, to renounce and forsake all earthly dependencies, whether elevated and conspicuous, (like the mountains of Lebanon, Amana, Shenir, and Hermon,) or abounding in animal strength and fierceness, like the lions and leopards. And the reason why thou art thus invited,—and the proof that the motive is *love*,—are seen in the *fact*, that all external things, however exalted and powerful, are neither *righteousness*, *goodness*, nor *truth*; nor can they produce the effects of *these*, any more than the thorn can produce grapes, or the thistle figs.

Outward things are indeed good, very good for the purposes they were intended to answer; but the immortal spirit cannot derive its *solace* nor its *sustenance* from them. But there is *most really* a "tree of life," the fruits of which are ordained and qualified to satisfy its cravings, and to supply all its necessities. This tree of life is "Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God," "manifested in the flesh;" in thy flesh, and in mine, and in the flesh of all mankind. He comes in unspeakable mercy, to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;"—and "to bless us, by turning *every one* of us from our iniquities." Oh! how great is that delusion which *teaches*, and *believes*, that Christ can be limited or confined to *one blessed person*,—or to one age of the world! See-

ing the scriptures testify that he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;"—and that he is "the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

The bright assemblage of pure and living energies which are found in every human soul, are luminous *witnesses* of his presence there; and these "constitute the "Lord's host" of "ministering spirits" (to which the apostle alludes) "that are sent forth to minister for them that shall be the heirs of salvation." Under the shadow of this heavenly tree of life, the soul can "sit with great delight, and his fruits will be sweet to her taste. She will be taken to his banqueting-house, and his banner over her will be love."

These things are not *mysteries*, but are most surely realized in every mind, in proportion as its "meat and drink" are love, joy, peace; gentleness, goodness, truth, &c. (And they are "sweet to its taste," as undeniably as their opposites,—hatred, sorrow, contention, fierceness, wickedness, falsehood, &c. are bitter and loathsome.)

"I know, I know," that these will last,

Their joy,—their peace, will ne'er be past.

Thy dear parents are embraced in my fraternal affection, and saluted with the remembrance of my family and myself. Thy filial 'attachment, and the stream of reciprocal love which flows *to thee* from my heart, are more estimable than gold, or pearls, or any worldly treasure, to thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 2nd, 1830.

To say that I have often thought of thee, my dear friend, and of all my friends at and about B., would be *common-place*, and would by no means convey an idea of that earnestness of affection with which you have been remembered.

I was favoured to arrive safely at my dear home on the 12th of last month, and to find my beloved domestic circle in good health,—and still possessed of unimpaired affection, for their long absented wanderer. Our meeting was mutually joyful; and my heart was filled with thankfulness to the merciful Author of our being, for the great blessings contained in the interchange of even *domestic love*. Oh! who that has ever felt them, can doubt that they are *real*? and that there is an eternal distinction between the source from which *they* flow, and the doleful fountain of *sighs*, and *tears*, and *agonies*? But, alas! the latter also are *too real* to be disputed; and *both*, as effects, give self-evidence that there are causes which produce them. The *existence* of the tree is known by its fruits, as well as its kind.

We are sent into this world to philosophize, (to learn the dictates of wisdom,) in relation to these *realities*, in which our interest is so great, *forever*; (that is perpetually, both in time and eternity.) And in this school, all is practical; and *truth* is not left to be determined by the uncertain glancings of the imagination, or the wayward reasonings which embrace *them* for a foundation; but *facts*, which are always true, arise in countless multitudes around us, and by them we are inspired with *certain knowledge*. All the verities of

life, in the diversified modes of *vegetable*, *animal*, and *spiritual*,—each seeking its appropriate food in its proper field of existence, and bringing forth *forms* and consequences corresponding with its nature,—are exemplifications of the “thousand thousands” which minister to our *heavenly Father*, to impart to his children the infallible knowledge of the Truth, in all the various relations in which they are interested, either as inhabitants of the world of *matter*, or of *mind*. For, in respect to *both*, he is *gracious*, and he is *kind*. All of us, in certain stages of experience, are disposed as Abraham was when in the same state, to petition for the *life* and *felicity* of that *birth* which is “after the flesh.” “Oh! that Ishmael might live before thee.” And the prayer is granted, even in respect to that. “Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.” And so, we see it is *now*, as well as formerly. The same unchangeable mercy continues to bless, and to multiply the natural creature and his enjoyments, though his living is procured in the wilderness of this world,—and his selfish propensities and wants cause “his hand to be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” For we see that the very nature of worldly benefits is *exclusive*. That which I *eat*, and *drink*, and *wear*, no other person can use in the same way, without excluding me. But it is joyfully the reverse, in respect to the *good things* which appertain to him that is “born after the Spirit.”

Thou and thy dear parents, and sister, and S. P., witnessed more than once, in company with our be-

LETTER OF EDWARD STABLER.

loved friends, that there was no power either felt or desired, to monopolize *purity of heart*,—or *meekness*,—or *gentleness*,—or *kindness*,—or *love*; but we all perceived with gladness, that the aboundings of any one, so far from impoverishing the rest, increased the measure of each one's possession; and, like the beautiful emblem, *sun-shine*, the more each one had, the more it abounded unto all.

• These precious things, my young friend, are worthy of all attention, to be cultivated and cherished; for *they* also will increase and multiply, until, like the patriarchs of old, we may have *flocks* and *herds* of them, and become exceedingly rich in heavenly treasures, which “moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.” Here, I am sure we may all see the everlasting goodness of the God of love, and perceive his readiness to make us affluent in the precious things of his kingdom, inasmuch as he gives them to us unasked, and only requires on our part that we should receive and cherish them. And this was the prophet's view, when he said, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall *nourish* a *young cow* and *two sheep*; and for the abundance of milk that they shall give, he shall eat butter; for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.” By this beautiful and accurate symbol, he shows the felicitous consequences of receiving and nourishing the “good and perfect gifts” of our Divine Benefactor.

This will be made even more plain, by reversing the statement, and substituting a *young lion* and *two*

tigers to be nourished, instead of the gentle, profitable, and harmless natures of the cow and the sheep. No rational understanding can for one moment hesitate to believe, that *devastation* and *destruction*, instead of *butter* and *honey*, would be the result of such a disastrous choice. Well,—it is even so with every one who nourishes the pure and gentle,—or the fierce and destructive, tempers which characterize the different animals above mentioned.

I am aware that I have not deserved that thou shouldst write to me soon; nevertheless I desire it. And perhaps I may venture to plead in excuse for my tardiness in repaying the debt which thy last letter placed me under,—the long journey that I have performed,—a multitude of concerns that engaged my attention upon my return,—and my crippled hand. But, after all, I would incomparably rather depend upon thy affection to dictate when thou shouldst write to me, than upon any sense of debt or obligation. My love to S. P., and to E. K. when thou seest her. To the former, thou mayst give the perusal of this letter, and she may read it as if addressed to herself. My affectionate remembrance to my other friends who may inquire after thy very affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 9th mo. 8th, 1830.

I arrived at my home, my dear C., on the 12th of last month, and found all the beloved inmates of my domestic circle in good health, and prepared to receive their wanderer with as much affection as ever. And

my enjoyments have sometimes enabled me to say with the psalmist, "My lines have fallen in pleasant places: I have a goodly heritage." - How certain it is, that this pleasant state of things is abundantly more dependant upon the state of the mind, than upon outward condition! And could thy friend always maintain perfect fidelity to the best of Masters, he might witness a perpetual increase of capacity to receive, in still increasing proportions, those treasures which are out of the reach of moth, rust, or thieves.

The human mind may be compared to a household constituted of many persons; and, if all of them were fierce, angry, unjust, cruel, proud, and hateful,—is it not self-evident that they would necessarily be miserable,—though their habitation were the most splendid of palaces,—and the revenues of the world were appropriated to supply their necessities? But, change their mental condition, and render them gentle, kind, just, merciful, humble, and affectionate;—and though their habitation were a mud-walled cottage, with bread and water only for their food,—they would necessarily be happy. These heavenly powers would render every place *pleasant*, and every heritage *goodly*. How unspeakably important it is, then, to cultivate and cherish one class of these principles, and to suppress the other! Thy gentle spirit, my dear friend, has partaken largely of the benefits resulting from this *culture*; and thou hast been sustained in quietude, by these celestial friends to the humble soul, under circumstances that, in opposite conditions, would have produced unmitigated agony. And I have no doubt, that thou canst join

with me, in wondering that any rational being should ever have believed that *doctrines* and *opinions* were of sufficient importance to claim, and receive so large a portion of the devoted attention of intelligent creatures; when it is evident to every person's experience, that joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, are invariably the effects of *living powers*; and that doctrines and opinions have no more actual influence in the concern, than the philosophical notions of men have in establishing the order of the universe; by which all its phenomena are produced and regulated, from the smallest vegetable or insect, up to the planets in their courses, and the stupendous arrangement of revolving worlds.

What a blessed thing it is, that mankind are not left without these powerful *matter-of-fact* witnesses to those truths, in which we are all so deeply interested! They are, in my apprehension, the host of angels which are sent forth by "Christ, the power and wisdom of God," to gather us *from the four winds;—from the uttermost parts of earth, to the uttermost parts of heaven.*" That is, they are the influences of Divine power and wisdom, to redeem and save the souls of the children of men from their vassalage to "the wisdom which is from beneath, that is earthly, sensual and devilish;"—and to place them under the patronage of that "which is from above,—which is pure,—peaceable,—gentle,—and easy to be entreated,—full of mercy,—and full of good fruits,—without partiality,—and without hypocrisy." For these are but different modes of describing the same heavenly realities; and blessed are they who are not offended at that manifestation of the Divine life

in them, which visits and operates, in this way, upon them, in order to make them "partakers of his Divine nature."

"Let not thy heart be troubled" at the "wars and rumours of wars," in the professing religious world; nor at "the sea and the waves roaring,—and men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth." For all these things must take place, for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in thee,—in me,—and in all intelligent creatures; that "the things which *can be shaken*" may be removed; and those only which *cannot be shaken*, may remain. For, as the former are removed out of their place, the veil (which is constituted of them) becomes rent; and then we can "see the King in his beauty," and in his goodness,—and in his "great glory." And though "the kindreds of the earth" may "mourn because of him;" yet the emancipated spirits (liberated like Lazarus from his grave-clothes) shall come forth, children of a glorious resurrection,—and shall rejoice with joy unspeakable.

I shall be very glad to hear from thee soon, if it shall please thee to indulge me with such a favour. And if thy dear parents and thyself will make up your minds to come to our next Yearly Meeting, and from there to Alexandria, many hearts will be made glad, as well as mine. And why need you confine yourselves? You have enough of the good things of this world; and I think the journey would be of use to all of you, besides doing what you are all so fond of,

making your friends happy. Thy little namesake is in fine health, and as sprightly as a bird. My best love salutes thy beloved parents, thyself, and all my friends. Farewell!

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 10th mo. 1st, 1830.

“There are diversities of gifts,” my dear friend, “but *the same Spirit*; differences of administrations, but *the same Lord*; diversities of operations, but it is *the same God* that worketh all in all.” And what an unspeakable favour it is, when we can distinguish between the precious donations and operations of our heavenly Father, and the words or imaginings of the human mind concerning them! From the *former*, which are living and powerful, all sorts of blessings and preservations are experienced. While from the *latter*, the children of men have never reaped any better harvest, than sects and divisions,—oppositions and contentions.

When we yield ourselves in subjection to the Divine *operations*, which work in us by his *gifts*, and produce the whole form and substance of his *administration*, we are then really conforming to the Divine will. And whether we are in sickness or in health,—at home or abroad,—in affluence or in poverty,—this conformity will occasion the greatest possible good to grow out of our present condition. And though that condition may be compared to a “wilderness and solitary place,” it shall become “glad for us,—and the desert shall re-

joice, and blossom as the rose;"—by reason of those blessed influences of creating and redeeming power, which in the beginning constructed this beautiful outward universe, out of the "formless void" which was shrouded in darkness.

If I am not mistaken in my estimate of thy experience, thou hast passed "through much mental tribulation." Thy state has often appeared like a wilderness and solitary place; and it has seemed to thy anxious spirit, as if thou wast surrounded only by such tempers and propensities as are natural to the "wild beasts of the desert." But this experience has taught thee the nature and tendencies of these tempers and propensities,—which no eloquence of description could have shown thee without their agency. And as the precious "blood of Christ" (which is his life,—and the spring or fountain of all holy tempers and propensities) has been shed abroad in thy heart, thou hast thereby (and there is no other way possible) practically known the *true Author* of thy salvation,—the way of his working;—and that he has indeed, by the touches of his *love*, removed *hatred* far from thee,—and by his *joy*, displaced thy *sorrow*;—and that he is capable and disposed, in like manner, and by powers equally effectual, to wash *all* the robes of thy spirit, and make them white, and free from all the stains and defilements of unrighteousness.

If I have formed a true judgment of thy experience, thou hast abundant cause to "hold fast thy confidence" in the everlasting kindness and sufficiency of that Di-

vine life, which has revealed its wisdom and power in thee; and thy Saviour has thus far proved himself, by his works, to be both willing and able to accomplish all that remains to be done for thy entire redemption.

I was favoured to finish the work to which I believed myself called last summer, to the entire relief of my own mind; and was restored to my beloved family on the 12th of the 8th month. I found them all in health, and prepared to receive their long absented wanderer with their accustomed fullness of affection. And, through Divine mercy, my mind has been so peaceful since my return, that I have been able in a measure to adopt the language of the psalmist, "My lines have fallen in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage." But what could the world do for me, with all its treasures and glories, without the favour and mercy of Him who can alone give peace? May I therefore be enabled by his power to do every thing that he requires, both in acting and suffering, that his will may be accomplished in me, at home and abroad; and in all things.

I can with confidence assure thee, that I should be as much pleased to visit my beloved friends in Jersey, as they would be to receive me; but I wish not to go in my own will; or from selfish motives, both for their sakes and my own. In the mean while, let us be contented to love one another, as our heavenly Father hath loved us; and then, whether we ever personally meet again or not, all will be well; for we shall reap the rich fruits of love, which will be a feast indeed.

Please to present my affectionate remembrance to thy dear parents, and to Friends of your village,—and receive a share for thyself from thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 5th, 1830.

The return of our welcome visitors to Baltimore, affords me an opportunity, my dear cousin, to attempt a due acknowledgment of the favour thou conferred upon me by thy letter of 5th ult.

The dispiriting influences of disease hung about me for some time after my return from attending your Quarterly meeting,—so as to disqualify me for writing, even to those I love. Thy letter, however, would have afforded a salutary and efficient stimulus to have replied to it forthwith, but I had to leave home; and since then, my northern tour and the Yearly Meeting, thou knowest, have both intervened to occupy my attention. Here I am however at last, again venturing my feeble powers upon the boundless ocean of thought and affection, to ascertain if I can meet with any thing that can encourage or instruct thee. What an expanded field is spread before us, abounding with numberless realities which are capable of imparting both pleasure and instruction! And why is it that the sensitive and intelligent sons and daughters of men derive so small and such fugitive enjoyments from a scene so rich and abundant? Is it not because their attention is absorbed, and their affections too exclusively occupied with the things which are manifested by their natural faculties? Their immortal and intelligent spirits

(which are capable of feeding on "angel's food," and of "shining as the stars forever and ever,") become hereby engaged in groping among the dust of the earth for the "pearl of great price,"—the rich treasure of *perpetual happiness!* It is a most interesting and important inquiry, why it is so? and experience must furnish the clue to the investigation.

The outward world presents allurements that are visible and palpable. They furnish gratifications to the natural senses, and afford pleasures which never were disputed. They are the first class of things of which we are conscious; and we behold kindreds, nations, tongues and people bowing before them. But the fact is too often overlooked or not duly appreciated, that these enjoyments are evanescent,—easily interrupted,—and, at most, only minister to that portion of our being which is transient and perishable like themselves. There is, however, another region of certainties, to which all mankind have equal access,—which appertains to the immortal part of our existence, and the realities of which are as durable as itself. But we are all in succession so fascinated with the *former*, that they are like the veil of the Jewish temple which interposed between the people and the Holy of holies,—where the altar of the covenant, and the cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy seat,—and the golden pot that had manna;—and Aaron's rod that budded, &c., were continually present; but were as entirely concealed from the perception of the general mass of the Jews, as if they had not existed. And it is no less certain, that there is in every human soul

an antitype of all these things. There is a *Holy of holies*, where the Divine presence is exhibited as a Judge, a Teacher, and a Saviour. And there is an *altar*, upon which those sacrifices of outward things are offered, which reconcile or restore us to the Divine harmony. And there are *cherubims of glory*, which consist of all those heavenly powers that are divinely appointed as agents of the Father of mercies, to minister for our redemption and salvation. And there is *heavenly manna*, upon which the soul can feed, and be nourished up unto eternal life; and this is constituted of all the "fruits of the Spirit;" namely, "love, joy, peace, gentleness," &c. And Aaron's rod that budded is a striking symbol of that resurrection to which Christ alluded when he said, "though he were dead, yet shall he live;" for the soul, being reanimated by the life of God (to which it had died by a vassalage to the world) again brings forth the peaceable fruits of innocence and righteousness, which are as natural to it as almonds were to the *rod of Aaron*.

But all these precious things are hidden by the veil of carnal attachments and terrestrial interests; and they are not discerned; though they are of greater consequence to every human soul than all other things put together. But an apostle has assured us, that this "veil is done away in Christ." And accordingly, as many as become subject to the government of the Divine life manifested *in them*, are instructed and enabled by it to "crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof;" and by this process, the *veil* becomes gradually "rent from the top to the bottom," and all the glorious certainties

of *another world* (with which they had always been connected without noticing it) beam out as conspicuously as *that* with which they had previously been conversant. And the scriptures which speak of these precious truths, become opened to their understandings by their becoming acquainted with *the things* recorded there. And they know them to be true, by an evidence infinitely more certain than all the assurances to be derived from *criticism, history, or credulity*.

This is the religion that I wish thee to seek after and enjoy. A religion consisting of *vital energies*,—the origin of which is Divine; for God is its author, and Infinite Wisdom its contriver. Oh! how poor and feeble is the absurd *theology* of man, when its *doctrines, notions, and creeds* are compared with the living streams of *wisdom, goodness, and power*, which issue and come forth from before Him whose throne is heaven, and the earth his footstool! but who nevertheless 'condescends to dwell with the humble and contrite ones, in order to change the "wilderness (of mind) into an Eden,—and the desert into a garden of the Lord."

I intended to send this by our friends H. and E., but business interfering, prevented me from finishing it in time. They left us this morning, and have gone, surrounded with our love and best wishes. They have afforded us great pleasure by their visit. Present my affectionate salutation to thy father, mother, and sisters, and receive for thyself a full share from thy affectionate friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 9th, 1830.

It is now more than a month since I received thy last acceptable tribute of affection from Philadelphia. I have been there since, and on my way, at Wilmington, I heard with much satisfaction, that your mountain journey had been of great service to thy health.

My visit to the north was for the purpose of taking a dear daughter to a female school at West Chester; and thence I went to Philadelphia, and had the pleasant company of many dear friends to our Yearly Meeting at Baltimore. I enjoyed my visit (though a short one) to Philadelphia, where there are so many dear ones,—between whom and myself, the cords of love are strong, and thickly woven. And among them is my beloved young friend, who is also an object of thy tender attachment. May I not adopt the apostle's language in relation to a similar circumstance?—“I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the Truth.” And as you walk in the Truth, it will beautify you, and render you lovely in each other's sight; and what is of still greater moment, and more desirable than all other things,—it will make you happy:—and how ardently does my heart covet that you may be durably, permanently happy! Can such a wish be formed, and sincerely felt in the mind of a poor frail being like myself? And shall it be supposed that it does not exist, in proportionate plentitude, in that *infinite* and *perfect Being*, whose children you are in reality? It would be profanation indeed, to accredit such a suggestion. From the first of my acquaintance with thee, I saw, and was delighted to

see, the marks of His presence with thee. And though it may often have appeared to thee, that thy path was thorny and perplexed,—yet, according to thy own beautiful quotation, these *wounds* have elicited *fragrance*, and “breathed sweetness out of woe.”

I have often admired the justness and applicability to human nature, of the figure of the “Holy of holies” in the Jewish tabernacle;—wherein was the “altar of the covenant,”—and “the cherubims of glory, overshadowing the mercy seat;”—and “the golden pot that had manna,”—and “Aaron’s rod that budded,” &c. But all these were concealed from the Jews *by a veil*; so that, though they were *there* in the utmost reality, the multitude could not see them because of *its* interposition. “These were figures for the time then present;” but their antitype is perennial. It existed then,—and it still exists. For every soul is designed and constructed by the heavenly Architect for a “holy of holies,”—where he manifests his Divine presence as a Judge,—a Saviour,—and a Helper in every needful time. And *there* is the altar, upon which the sacrifices of outward things are offered, which reconcile (or restore) us to the Divine harmony. And *there* are the cherubims of *glory*, shadowing the mercy seat, which consist of all the powers that minister to our redemption or salvation, as agents of Divine mercy. And *there* only, is found the heavenly manna, upon which the soul can feed, and be nourished up unto eternal life: and this is constituted of all the “fruits of the Spirit,—*righteousness*,—goodness,—and truth.” And “Aaron’s rod that budded,” is a striking and accu-

rate symbol of that condition of soul, which, after having been long "dead in trespasses and sins," comes to witness the resurrection, by a renewal of the Divine life: and when thus reanimated, it produces the precious fruits of innocence, which are as congenial to it when thus vivified, as "ripe almonds" to the rod of Aaron.

All these glorious things are hidden by the veil of carnal attachments and temporal interests; and too many of the sons and daughters of men *behold them not*;—though they possess a *certainty of existence*,—and are of greater consequence to human happiness than all other things put together. But we are assured by an apostle, that "the veil is done away in Christ:" and consequently, it is still true, as it always has been, that as many as become obedient to the Divine life, ("Christ within, the hope of glory,") are by him enabled and induced to "crucify the flesh with the lusts (wrong desires) thereof." And in proportion as this process is accomplished, the veil becomes "rent from the top to the bottom;"—and all the blessed certainties of *another world* (with which they have always been connected without perceiving it) beam out upon their delighted vision, as conspicuously as the realities of the material world, with which they had been previously conversant. And as the *scriptures* which mention these important truths, are opened to their understandings, they become acquainted with *the things* therein recorded,—and know them to be true, by an evidence infinitely stronger than all the assurances which can be derived from criticism, philosophy, or credulity.

This is the religion, my dear friend, that I wish thee to continue to seek after, and enjoy. Its builder and maker is thy God, and my God; and it will open his kingdom within thee, and make thee a blessed inhabitant of *that state of being*, where joy and gladness shall maintain an everlasting dominion, "and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

My affectionate remembrance is presented to thy father and mother, brothers and sisters, and be assured that I shall always rejoice in thy welfare.

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 11th mo. 22nd, 1830.

Thy kind and affectionate letter, which I have perused many times since I parted with thee, remains yet unanswered. I would gladly make a *full return*, by adding (if it were in my power) to reciprocal attachment, an increased knowledge of the means by which thy happiness may be enlarged and perfected. The things of time have an unquestionable influence, to a certain extent, in the all-important concern of human happiness. But when I look to these, and to that portion of thy being which is connected with them, I cannot perceive any deficiency. Thou hast affectionate and wise parents, brothers, and a sister, and a numerous train of friends, who love thee tenderly, and are beloved by thee; with as much of the good things of this world as supply all thy wants. And though I may oppose the general sentiment of mankind, I am, nevertheless, assuredly persuaded, that the increase of these to any possible extent, would most probably in-

crease thy perplexity and vexation, but could not enlarge thy happiness. Thou hast already then, all that this world can give thee in relation to the "end and aim" of thy existence. But thou art aware from every day's experience, that perfect as the operations of these things are, in their assigned department, there is a *void* which no amount of temporal possessions can in any degree fill or satisfy. This vacuum (like *thirst*, which cannot be slaked by food,—though the latter is a perfect remedy for hunger) proves the existence of appetites which require something for their gratification that the material world cannot supply. Can it be supposed, that these cravings have no appropriate object? Can our heavenly Father have bestowed them for the purpose of torment? His beneficence in all other cases, demonstrates the impiety and absurdity of such a supposition:—and the existence of "another world," abounding in congenial realities, which are as capable of satisfying these desires, as food and drink are of allaying hunger and thirst,—is a *truth*, supported alike by reason, scripture, and experience.

But, unhappily, too many of the children of men do not perceive this: and when disappointed of the effects which they expected from a *smaller* accumulation of temporal goods, they press after a *larger*; the acquisition of which increases the ardour of desire, instead of satisfying it. And in that career, there never was found a *resting place*; but all is *ocean*, ever fluctuating, and always tumultuous! The soul, in the mean time, like the dove *sent forth* from Noah's ark, finds no repose, no peace. This produces a condition similar to

the state of the Jews when they were visited by the *Saviour*, in a body prepared for the purpose. Their attention was altogether absorbed by things extraneous from themselves. Their law, their religion, their observances, were all *outward*; and the *rewards* which were promised, and the *penalties* which were threatened,—were all in accordance with *the law* and *the nature* to which they were addressed. But after fulfilling all moral and natural righteousness, (which none of *them* could do,) he directed their attention to a “kingdom of God within them;” which, according to his apostle, consisted “not in *word*, but in *power*.” It was by this power only, that “all righteousness” was fulfilled *in him*: and *their* dependance upon *other* and *inadequate* causes, was the reason why none of them “fulfilled the law.” Much less then, could they fulfil *all righteousness* by the use of means which were unequal to the achievement of the lowest orders of rectitude. Their goodness, therefore, was eminently defective, and their happiness not more perfect.

The same consequences necessarily result from similar causes in all ages; because human nature is always essentially the same,—and principles are unchangeable. If an outward law, and religion, and usages, could only produce for the Jews a condition so degraded and imperfect, they cannot do more for us; seeing that they relate only to the outward man—the creature of flesh and blood. But the soul (or spiritual creature) is an inhabitant of the other world, and capable of a sublime intercourse with “Mount Sion, and the city of the living God,—the heavenly Jerusalem;

and with the innumerable company of angels,—and with God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect,—and with Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,—and with the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

These are all spiritual realities, congenial with the soul, and capable of being perceived by it. And they are transiently perceived by thousands who deem them *common things*, because they do not attend to their operations, nor mark their tendencies, nor follow their incitements. The blessed Jesus, our holy example, “was in all points tempted like as we are;” but was preserved *free from sin*. And though the commencement of his earthly career was in a *stable*, his progress was distinguished by a continual increase of wisdom, goodness and power; and his end was crowned with a triumphant conquest over every principle of evil. All this was accomplished by his obedience to that eternal, unchangeable Spirit, which “convinces the world of sin,—of righteousness,—and of judgment.” It is, therefore, by attending to the import of these convictions, that we can become “*like him*,” and experience a similar progress, terminating in the same glorious attainment. “Unto him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

It is by this process only, that the “heavens become opened,” and we come to perceive the true import of the writings of the holy men of old, in the scriptures; and that they do not relate to a world and a kingdom,

either outward or *afar off*; but they are all near at hand, even at the "very door" of our hearts;—accompanying us during our daily employments, and as we are sitting in our houses, and as we are walking by the way, and as we are lying down, and rising up. And the Divine visitant (omnipresent to all the circumstances which relate to our *weal* or *woe*) opens to our understandings the good and evil of every concern, both of mind and body: and blessed are all they who lay the government on his shoulders, and are not offended in him.

My best love salutes thy dear parents, brothers, and sister;—also, S. P. and all my friends in your neighbourhood. For thyself, thou knowest the affection which inspires the heart of thy friend,

EDWARD STABLER.

Alexandria, 1st mo. 8th, 1831.

I acknowledge, my dear young friends, that your talents for epistolary composition are superior to mine. Your last very acceptable letter has demonstrated the fact to my satisfaction. But as our intercourse is not for the purpose of literary competition, but has (I believe) a much nobler aim, a disparity in *that order* of powers is of small comparative importance.

I think I have perceived in both of you, satisfactory evidences that you have been with Jesus;—and what if I say, more frequently than you have been aware of. For, in the progress of our experience, there are many things by which our "eyes are hold-

en," so that we do not know him;—even when he walketh with us by the way that we have chosen, and expoundeth to us the true meaning of the scriptures which are written in living characters upon our hearts and understandings. In this way, unquestionably, the outward scriptures were first inscribed, before it was possible for them to have been written in books.

Like the first members of the human race, every one of us is placed in a garden abounding with fruits, the participation of which, under the pure and innocent government of the Divine nature, would constitute an Eden, or state of unmixed enjoyment. We are all likewise favoured with a premonition to avoid every thing which would mingle evil with our good. But, through the seducing presentations of things that seem "fair to look upon,—and good for food,—and profitable to make one wise,"—we all fall, more or less, from the innocence in which we were created. A new series of inscriptions is thereby made upon our minds, the relative meaning of which, it is all-important for us to know. But the condition which ensues from our fall, and the sorrow and inquietude which attend it, render us incapable of perceiving that it is the *God of love* who is walking with us, though we are going *from Jerusalem* (the state of peace) *to Emmaus*, (an obscure and despised condition,) and causes "our hearts to burn within us," while he opens to our understandings the effects which have been produced in us, by our misdeeming pursuits of enjoyment.

This is the state of mind, which has in all generations believed and portrayed the Divine Fountain of goodness, as *angry, fierce, revengeful, and inexorable*. And such an apprehension most surely "holds our eyes" from knowing him *as he is*;—and ascribes to him those features of character, which belong altogether to the fallen creature;—and in which it is impossible that *his* holy and immutable nature should ever have any part. It is, on the contrary, an act of his everlasting *mercy*, to manifest himself in the "cool of the day,"—when the energy and warmth of misplaced desire have subsided,—to call our attention to the causes which have operated so mournful a change in our condition. If then, *like the two disciples*, we invite him to "abide with us," he will make himself known to us in his *true character*, by blessing, breaking, and dispensing to us the bread of life.

The first and greatest commandment is, to "love the Lord our God." But it is self-evident, that it is an impossibility to us, while we view him through the distorting medium of unrighteousness;—because that always represents him "as a *hard* and an *austere* master." Such a view may (and does) excite *dread* and *terror*;—but *love*,—*never!* By "his stripes," however, we may be infallibly "healed" of all our misapprehensions and false estimates: and he begins to inflict them at the commencement of our *deviations* from holy rectitude. Of *these*, while they are yet few and small, he forms his "whip of small cords," to drive out of the temples of our hearts all unholy traffickers. For, let it never be forgotten, that our destruction is

of ourselves,—that it is our “own backslidings that *reprove* us, and our own wickedness that *corrects*” us. And there can be no other process so effectual to make us see that it is an “*evil thing* and a *bitter*, that we have *separated ourselves* from the Lord our God.” And when this is demonstrated, if the “wicked man will forsake his wickedness, and do those things that are lawful and right,—the wickedness he hath done shall be remembered no more.” It requires no vicarious offering, to reconcile him to his Creator;—no punishment of an innocent person for the guilty;—(which would be an utter violation of all justice and mercy;) but places the punishment according to justice, and guided by most merciful kindness, upon *that* which ought to perish, in order that the soul may again stand in the *Divine image*, “holy, harmless, and undefiled,”—by being separated from all sin.

“If I wash thee not, (said our holy example,) thou hast no part in me.” But if, with his disciple formerly, we be willing that he wash, not only our *feet*, but our *hands*, and our *heads*,—our *steps* will become pure, and our *works* will become holy,—and all the errors of our *understandings* will be rectified. Then shall we “see the King in his beauty;”—and he will no longer appear as a hard and austere master;—neither will it appear impossible to “love him with all the heart,—with all the mind,—and with all the strength.”

My paper reminds me that I must soon close this communication; but I am unwilling to do it without apprising you how much I value your letters: they

always refresh my spirit; and, like couriers sent on messages of love, they kindle afresh the tender warmth of affection, by which I feel attached to every one of your household.

EDWARD STABLER.

On the 10th of the 1st month, 1831, the beloved subject of this memoir went to his store as usual, though considerably indisposed, and having slept but little the night before. His disease increased, and he returned to his dwelling. That evening he took a light dose of medicine, and kept house the next day. On the 12th and 13th, he attended to his business again. During these two days, he was employed at intervals in writing the following *unfinished* letter to his friend Halliday Jackson, of Darby, in the State of Pennsylvania, in reply to one which gave the affecting account of the death of his wife. We might almost believe, from the appositeness of the language, that the writer, when he penned this letter, had a presentiment of his own approaching departure,—when his spirit would escape from the “dark walls of its earthly habitation,” and be favoured with a view of those spiritual realities, which he believed had ravished his friend “with ecstasy and adoration.”

1st mo. 1831.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Thy very acceptable letter of the 4th inst. is at hand. I had heard of thy great loss by a letter from a friend in Philadelphia, several days before thy

favour came to hand; and truly my heart did earnestly sympathize with thee and thy bereaved family.

I have felt the pangs, and I know the state of the *widower* and the *orphan*; for I *have been both*, and experienced in all its bitter power the sickness of heart which is inseparable from both conditions. I also know the goodness of our Almighty Friend and Father, in the fulfilment of the gracious declaration, that "he that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

A privation, such as you have sustained in parting with one so *dearly* and so *worthily* beloved, is of all others the most eminently calculated to "remove the earth out of her place;"—because it shakes it at its dearest point of attachment. Nor is it unreasonable or improper to mourn. This we may do without *repining*, and without *murmuring*, or "charging God foolishly." And then, though this severe and agonizing process (like the ploughing of the soil) may lacerate the smooth and long settled surface of the soul's affections, yet, through the kindness of the "Father of mercies," it is thereby prepared to receive the spiritual seed of his kingdom more deeply into its bosom; where, being nourished by the early and the latter rain from the same Fountain of mercy, it will bring forth its precious "fruit of holiness, and the end everlasting life."

From thy very interesting account of the last moments of thy beloved companion, I think it altogether probable that her joy was so sublime, that (compara-

tively) it might be said; she felt joy for the first time. We who are still connected with time, and around whose spirits the dark walls of the earthly tabernacle are still compacted by health, and whose views of celestial things are shaded by terrestrial attachments, are incapable of such a vision of spiritual realities, in their unclouded brightness, as ravished her spirit with ecstasy and "adoration."

But when we witness the end of the righteous, in a case where all the powers of affection rivet our attention to the object,—and where the same powers lead us to look back with intense interest on the life of one so dear, that has been thus triumphantly crowned at its close,—surely the whole scene abounds with instruction, and encouragement to persevere in a similar path, and not to faint under the frailties and weaknesses which are, perhaps, inseparable from a probationary and progressive state of being.

When the blessed Messiah said to his few, and in their then condition, feeble followers, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,"—the nature of that kingdom, and the region of its existence, were probably alike unknown to them. Like all other human beings in a similar state, they could only form conjectures of this kingdom, as an unknown region foreign from themselves, and perhaps exclusively the abode of disembodied spirits. But he had previously told them that "the kingdom of heaven was within" them; and they afterwards found, that notwithstanding their fears and all the frailties with which they were environed, they

were gradually, but surely, advancing in knowledge and in experience. The principles which distinctively produced in them all that was good, and all that was evil, (like the separation between light and darkness,) became more and more conspicuous; and by yielding themselves in subjection to the Holy Spirit, which is the spring and fountain of all goodness, they were enabled to "speak with new tongues,"—to "cast out devils,"—to "take up serpents,"—and if they "drank of any deadly thing," that it "should not hurt them." They then perceived (as the eminent Paul afterwards stated) that "the kingdom of God was *in power*;"—that it was not an imaginary city, with walls of precious stones and gates of pearl; but consisted of realities infinitely more excellent than these terrestrial things, (which were only applicable as figures,) and possessed the capacity to produce "all righteousness, goodness and truth." And as these came to reign in them, their language became changed; they no longer called evil, good,—nor good, evil; but were enabled to call things by names truly descriptive of their natures. The same power enabled them to cast out the devils of wickedness, evil, falsehood and error; and to take up, or use without injury, those powers and affections of the mind, which, under the guidance of evil, were more venomous and destructive than serpents.

* * * * *

On the 13th of the month, which was the fifth of the week, he attended his meeting, where he was silent. In the afternoon, speaking of the subject; he

observed, that he would be willing to perform that duty so long as one could be found to join with him in it; for though, on this occasion, he had not been commissioned to speak, yet his mind had been favoured with deep instruction.

On the following afternoon, his daughter Anna was with him. He was evidently anxious about his disease, and the probability that he might soon be taken from his family. An awful storm was raging,—the measles were in the house,—and the scarlet fever was prevailing in Baltimore. He did not seem able to bear, silently, the anxieties which this combination of circumstances produced, but made frequent observations on human suffering. At last, however, his mind appeared to rest on the all-sufficiency of Love. "Love," he said, "is an Almighty Principle. If I were sure you would always love one another, I would ask nothing more for you;—then, brothers would protect their sisters, and sisters would encourage their brothers; so that you would never be in want of any blessing."

When his sons came in from business, to the evening meal, he desired that they would not expose themselves to danger by venturing out again into the storm. He was then much indisposed; but the greatest affection pervaded his whole deportment; and as he stood by the fire with his little children near him, he seemed to be clothed with heavenly love. Deeply interesting is the remembrance of what he appeared to be, on that memorable evening. Impressed with the conviction that his disease was malignant in its

character; he had completed, in the course of the day, some small matters of writing which required his personal attention; after which, as all seemed to be done, like a faithful servant he awaited the final summons to appear before his Master.

On first-day morning, he was too ill to rise. His face, throat, and breast, were covered with a scarlet flush, attended with a distressing fever, and symptoms of congestion in the head. A physician was called in, who prescribed for him; but the congestion seemed to increase; for he slept, under a sense of oppression, during the most of the day; although, when awaked, his mind was clear. As first-day night and second-day forenoon wore away, the disease steadily advanced. The writer, who was with him in the morning, observed him at one time in supplication; but the only words he could distinguish were, "Thy will be done." One of his little boys being in the chamber, he desired him to go out, lest he also might take that "dreadful disease."

In the afternoon of second-day, a great change for the worse took place. The congestion extended to the breast, accompanied with delirium and great oppression, both of the lungs and brain. Another physician was sent for. On consultation, they directed further remedies, which were resorted to without the slightest good effect. The beloved sufferer appeared unconscious of our intention, when we offered him a dose of medicine; though he understood us when we spoke to him. His breathing now became extremely laborious.—

Several of his family, who were old enough, and could bear the agonizing trial, were in his chamber; together with a few intimate friends who assisted in waiting on him. With the exception of a short period, the writer was constantly by his bed, endeavouring to sooth him and mitigate his sufferings. While engaged in this painful duty of nursing his sick parent, the hand of the writer came in contact with that of the invalid, who took hold of it and pressed it feebly, but affectionately. An attempt was made to cover his hand again with the bed-clothes; but he resisted the operation, and made known to us as well as he could do, that he was taking his last farewell! He was asked if there was any thing in his way; and he answered, "No." In a few moments, he inquired with great difficulty, as nearly as we could understand him, "My precious wife, where is she?" The object of his inquiry had retired from the room, overcome with distress; but she quickly returned, and sat by him. All the other members of the family who were at home, and old enough to realize the awfulness of the occasion, came to his bed-side. He seemed gratified at having us near; but he recognized our presence for a few moments only; for, the great stupor he had been labouring under, returned and closed the avenues of intercourse between us and his departing spirit. His breathing now became more oppressed;—the feeble remains of life gave way in the struggle;—he fell into a state of perfect ease,—and a short time before one o'clock on the morning of the 18th, he breathed his last!

The scene was solemn beyond description. All were bathed in tears;—but we felt assured, by the consoling and heavenly calm which covered our spirits at the time, that the change to him was one from mortality to immortal happiness. We sat under the covering of this heavenly feeling for a few minutes; and then retired from the chamber of death.

The kindness of our friends and neighbours was great and unintermitted, during the sickness of our beloved relative, and after his death. A large number of citizens attended his remains to the grave. The people of colour, who had found him a kind friend and a counsellor, gave evidence of their respect by following in a large body. John Foulke, an ancient Friend who has since departed this life, was in Alexandria at the time, in the prosecution of a religious visit. He delivered, at the grave, a solemn admonition; and stated the feeling which had been sealed upon his mind, that as the departed had ceased from his labours, his works would follow him. A few intimate friends returned with the family from the grave, and mingled in the social circle. The theme of conversation was the glorious event which had occurred,—that he whom they loved had been called from a world of probation, to a state of immutable felicity.

On the character of Edward Stabler, we may now indulge in a few remarks. From the earliest period at which his intimate friends became acquainted with him, he was amiable, intelligent, sincere. He was

tender-hearted, not only to his fellow-beings, but to the lowest creature that fell in his way.

With few advantages of literary education, he acquired a large fund of useful knowledge, which a finely improved taste and easy eloquence, enabled him to dispense in the most interesting and impressive manner. Under a due sense of the obligation to provide for the sustenance of human life, he engaged in business; and in all his temporal concerns was industrious, correct, and prosperous. The leisure that he had from business, was employed in the grateful occupation of improving his mind, and exerting himself for the benefit of others.

We have seen, that as a husband and a father, he was tender and affectionate. Every wish of his family was gratified, as far as it appeared consistent with their welfare. He was deeply distressed at the sickness of each member of his household; and more than commonly anxious while his children passed through those ordeals of disease, to which all are subject. On every occasion when they were ill, he was nearly unfitted for any employment but nursing them.

His communications in public were exceedingly interesting; conveying such views of religion as we see in his letters, but much more expanded, with such solemnity, persuasion, and clearness, as generally kept his hearers wrapped in profound attention. As much as he was admired on this account, he was, perhaps, equally interesting and useful in conversation. He possessed a lively imagination;—the process of thought

was rapid in his mind,—and a full flow of rich language enabled him to pour forth the stores of his heart and his understanding, to the delight of those who listened to him. It is not strange, that with such ability to communicate pleasure and instruction, his company should be sought. He was never too much engaged, to employ his powers for the instruction and consolation of the many who visited him in the hours of business, or called to spend an evening with him at home. In conversation with his children and other young persons, his aim was to enamour them of every thing good, without appearing to dictate or assume any superiority; and it may well be conceived how earnest were the young for enjoyments thus rendered lovely in their view.

From a multitude of letters which were written by his youthful acquaintances, and the friends of his riper years, we find that he was highly esteemed by all: for though there was not so much clearness and depth of view in his early, as his later correspondence, yet was there always something to be learned; and the warmth of his affections lent a charm to every thing that proceeded from his pen.

It is not to be supposed that he was faultless. In early life he gave way, at times, to passion; and he was probably too much attached at one period to the enjoyments of the world: but he had not a single vice, and his conduct towards his fellow-beings, both in social and commercial relations, was entirely upright. The undue excitements of temper, with those occasional depressions of spirit to which an unusually sen-

sitive nervous system rendered him liable, were so far overcome by Divine grace, that in the latter part of his life, we think he seldom erred in these respects.

On closing this review and the volume, we may profitably reflect for a few moments, on the character of a righteous man,—and the principles that conducted him safely through trials and distresses, and the more dangerous path of worldly prosperity,—to the end of his pilgrimage. Honesty, and obedience to duty, is the sum of the whole. But whence comes the knowledge of duty? The scriptures of truth, and the living words in the book of man's life, concur in testimony, that "there is none good but one; and that is God." From him proceeds the light that gives us this knowledge; and "that is the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

We may then say, in the language of the lip of Truth, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do them.*" As reasonably may we expect to reverse the laws of the material world, as to disobey any, even the least of his spiritual commands, and be accepted with Him.

APPENDIX.

THE following subject could not well be introduced into the body of the narrative, but being interestingly connected with the memory of the deceased, we have thought best to insert it in this place.

At the monthly meeting which was held in the 12th month of the year 1830, the attendance of religious meetings, in regard to which Edward Stabler had often been exercised, came before his mind in a very impressive manner. He viewed the efforts which had been made from time to time to excite the profitable attention of his friends to this subject, together with the small success, in some cases, which had followed the labour bestowed;—and though his heart was affected with mourning on the occasion, yet the mantle of hope still clothed his spirit, and he proposed that the meeting should address to each of its members an affectionate epistle on this important concern.

The subject was not acted on at that time, further than to be considered and referred to a future sitting; but before the occurrence of the next meeting, it pleased his heavenly Father to call him from works to rewards. The matter was however revived, with an interest proportioned to the feeling with which it had been opened, and the mournful solemnity imparted to it by his death; and a joint committee of men and

women Friends, was appointed to prepare such a communication as they might think suitable. They met at several times, and after much interesting conversation, agreed upon the following, which was adopted by the monthly meeting, viz :

An Address from Alexandria Monthly Meeting of Friends, to each of its Members.

Dearly beloved Friends,—

It is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the spirit of Christ, that those who are blessed by its heavenly influence, necessarily feel a desire that all their fellow creatures may be alike blessed by it. Under the influence of this feeling, the meeting has been introduced into a lively concern, on account of those of our members who have frequently been absent from our meetings, when we have felt that we were at the Lord's banqueting house, and that his banner over us was Love. A fear, a godly fear has arisen, that the cause of this absence might be an undue regard for the perishing things of time, by which there is danger of those things being placed above God in the soul, and of their being perverted, from ministers to our wants, into objects of our devotion. The Lord will not accept a divided affection; we must love him with our whole heart, and with our whole mind.

We have remembered how it was with the followers of our blessed Saviour, immediately after the removal of his outward manifestation, when the things of this world were removed from their thoughts, and their *whole hearts* were turned unto *Him*,—they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," "were all with one accord in one place," and "were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Believing, firmly, in the unchangeable nature of the love and mercy of our heavenly Father, that it is not confined to one age or generation of the world, but "is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," we have a full confidence, that as the Lord becomes uppermost in *our minds*—that as *we* love *him* more and the *world* less,—we shall find it *our* blessed experience also to be profited by being together;—*we* shall be "with one accord

in one place," and witness the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Has it not been our experience, that as any event has tended to show us the perishing nature of the things of this world, it has at the same time had a tendency to turn our minds to the Lord;—to make us desirous of "laying up treasure in heaven?" And in proportion as we have been able to feel the *love of God* to prevail *over all* in the soul, has it not been pleasant to be assembled with our brethren and sisters? Have we not then found that he continues to be with those who are gathered in his name, however few in number; and that his presence is manifested by the breaking of bread to the hungry soul?

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Here, then, is the true badge of the Christian discipleship; and if we *do* love one another, we shall esteem it a precious privilege to meet together in our religious assemblies to wait upon God; for the promise remains true, that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Blessed privilege! that we should thus have our strength renewed, and witness the highest and most glorious consolation of which the soul is capable, that of drawing nigh unto God and communing with him, by the performance of our duty. And how strikingly illustrative is this of the goodness of God, who, however we may be disposed to view him as "an hard master," makes only those things our duty which are best for us—which most contribute to our present and everlasting welfare.

Let us not then, beloved brothers and sisters, neglect the assembling of ourselves together for the solemn and interesting purpose of Divine worship. For, although we are well assured of the omnipresence of our heavenly Father, and that acceptable worship must be performed in spirit and in truth, without regard to time or place, yet in his wisdom has he made us social beings; and "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend;" and each one being concerned that nothing may stand in the way of a free circulation of Divine love amongst us, and of our being favoured to witness a union and communion of spirit,—we shall become bound together by a bond of peace and love, and be one another's help and joy in the Lord.

One of the excellencies of the Gospel dispensation, and one that strikingly shows the universal nature of the love of God to man, is, that under this dispensation we are not dependant upon an outward ministry for instruction in Divine things: the law is not now written "upon tables of stone;" for, "after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know thou the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more." Need we advert to the fact, established perhaps by all human experience, that when objects the most interesting are before our minds, we seek for silence in which to examine them; for in that state alone can we give them the attention we desire; and in that state also the mind is particularly susceptible of impressions from the Divine Spirit.

A concern has also been felt for our younger friends, that they may choose the Lord for their portion, and the God of Jacob for the lot of their inheritance, and come forward in support of that testimony which must soon be left for them alone to bear. And we firmly believe, that as they come together under the influence of desires for promoting the cause of Truth, they will feel their strength renewed.

Under a measure of the influence of that love which breathes "peace on earth and good will to men," the Monthly Meeting is concerned at this time to address itself to each of its members, holding out the language of invitation—"Come, let us go up together to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;" for "his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace."

Signed on behalf of Alexandria Monthly Meeting of Friends, held on the 24th of the 2nd month, 1831, by

BENJAMIN HALLOWELL, } Clerks.
MARGARET HALLOWELL, }



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